The Biographies of Rechungpa

The evolution of a Tibetan hagiography



Peter Alan Roberts

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF RECHUNGPA

This book traces the lifestory of Rechungpa (1084–1161)—the student of the famous teacher Milarepa—using rare and little-known manuscripts, and discovers how the image of both Milarepa and Rechungpa underwent fundamental transformations over a period of over three centuries. The author compares significant episodes in the life of Rechungpa as portrayed in a succession of texts and thus demonstrates the evolution of Rechungpa's biography. This is the first survey of the surviving literature which includes a detailed analysis of their dates, authorship and interrelationships. It shows how Rechungpa was increasingly portrayed as a rebellious, volatile and difficult pupil, as a lineage from a fellow-pupil prospered to become dominant in Tibet.

Peter Alan Roberts is a writer, translator and interpreter. He was born in South Wales, received his doctorate in Tibetan Studies at the University of Oxford, and worked as a Tibetan translator at Samye Ling Centre in Scotland. He presently lives in Hollywood, California.

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TO MY PARENTS
IORWERTH AND GLENYS ROBERTS

When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.
(From the screenplay of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance,* by James Warner Bella and Willis Goldbeck.)

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book examines the surviving accounts of the life of Rechungpa (1084–1161). He was a Tibetan master in the formative years of the Kagyu, one of the principal traditions of Buddhism in Tibet.

My involvement in Tibetan Buddhism dates back to 1974, and then I lived in or near Samye Ling Tibetan Centre in Scotland from 1978 to 1991. Kagyu lamas often tell stories of Rechungpa and his quarrels with his teacher Milarepa, the most famous early master of the Kagyu lineage. Rechungpa seemed to my contemporaries and me, to be a curious and contradictory persona, concerning whom little information was available.

I translated for Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's course on the life of Rechungpa at Thrangu Monastery in Bodhnath in 1990, and to my surprise he announced that the listeners would be able to eventually read the biography in my translation. Although the translation was intended to accompany this thesis, the readers are sadly still waiting.

Both Akong Rinpoche of the Samye Ling Centre (who is himself regarded as an emanation of Rechungpa) and Michael Aris at Oxford University encouraged the idea of choosing Rechungpa as a thesis from amongst the various projects I had in mind. I knew nothing about the date or provenance of Rechungpa's biography, which was itself difficult to obtain a copy of. I had assumed it was a very early work and that the thesis would be a straightforward project. I had no idea how complex and baffling a labyrinth I was about to enter.

The thesis assumed a readership that had a familiarity with Tibetan and all Tibetan words were simply transliterated into roman letters. However, for this book, assuming that the reader is more familiar with a phonetic version of Tibetan words, the names of people, lineages and places are given in that form, with transliteration in parenthesis if their incident is infrequent. However, not only does contemporary Tibetan phonology differ greatly from its ninth-century spelling, there are considerable variations in phonology across the Tibetan plateau, so that almost every archaic pronunciation is preserved in one place or another. Nevertheless, a regular method of phoneticisation has developed in the now abundant output of books on Tibet, and this is what I have attempted to follow here. It is by nature somewhat arbitrary, and I apologise for any irritation it may cause. I have not supplied phonetics for text titles, providing an English translation instead. I have also given the Tibetan for any text passages in transliteration only.

For the transliteration of Tibetan, I have chosen to capitalise the root-letter rather than the first letter; and have hyphenated syllables when they form words but not followed the system of hyphenating particles to their associated nouns. I am not claiming any superiority for this approach, but it is the form of transliteration I am at ease with and I apologise to anyone accustomed to another system.

In this book I shall present the successive parts of Rechungpa's life through the stages of their narrative evolution in a succession of texts. The focus is on the life of Rechungpa

primarily during his time as a pupil of Milarepa and therefore does not give a detailed description of his entire life as a normal biographical study would. The principal topic is the complex relationship between the numerous variants to be found in texts that have been little studied or even read. Rechungpa's particular version of Tibetan Buddhism and the history of his lineage are only briefly described in this book. The necessity of losing over a quarter of the thesis for publication has resulted in the absence of general introductions to Tibetan Buddhism and hagiography, and also a great deal of transliterated Tibetan text accompanying my translations.

The most important goal of this book will have been achieved if it helps others to explore this previously uncharted region, make fresh discoveries and correct any errors and delusions I had on this journey.

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This book owes its origins to a thesis that was undertaken on the suggestions and encouragement of Akong Rinpoche, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, the late Michael Aris and Prof. Richard Gombrich.

The search for and acquisition of texts has been greatly facilitated and fulfilled by Burkhard Quessel of the British Library and Ulrich Pagel of the erstwhile India Office, Hakan Wahlquist of the Folksmuseum, Stockholm; Valrae Reynolds of Newark Museum, Dr Tashigang of New Delhi, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Father Francis Tiso, Thomas Almsberger, Ani Pema Zangmo, Ani Yeshe Palmo and especially the late Michael Aris and Dan Martin. In particular, without E.Gene Smith's Aladdin's Cave of texts and his kindness the thesis would have been impossible.

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The thesis would not have been possible without the kindness of Irmgard Lauscher-Koch who can be said to be the selfless primogenitor of this thesis. I also thank the Boden Fund and the Michael Aris Trust for enabling me to reach the conclusion of this work.

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1
INTRODUCTION

Tibetan accounts of the life of Rechungpa *(Ras-chung-pa)* (1084–161) and of his teacher Milarepa *(Mi-la Ras-pa)* (1040–123) climaxed in 1488 with Tsangnyön Heruka's *(gTsang-smyon He-ru-ka) The Life of Milarepa*[1] and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,*[2] and in the sixteenth century with *The Life of Rechungpa*[3] by Tsangnyön Heruka's pupil, Götsang Repa.[4]

Rechungpa was a successor to the lineage of Marpa Chökyi Lodrö *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros)* (eleventh century) which was transmitted to him via Milarepa. Marpa had received teachings in India primarily from Nāropa who had been a pupil of Tilopa. According to Karṇatantra history, Tilopa went to Oḍḍiyāna, the land of the *ḍākinīs,* where he gained access to their queen from whom he received there the Karṇatantra or Nyengyu *(sNyan-rgyud),* which means 'The Aural Tantra' or literally 'Ear Tantra'. It is so called because the body of the *dākinī* queen disappeared and *The Vajra Verses (rDo-rje'i Tshig-rkang),* which are highly symbolic in content and form the kernel of the karṇatantra, sounded from a Hūṃ syllable suspended in space. Tilopa wrote down the words, returned to the human realm and passed this teaching on to his pupil Nāropa, telling him that he had received it directly from the 'bodyless ḍākiṇī in the temple of the illusory body'.[5] These teachings therefore became known as 'the bodyless ḍākinī dharma' *(lus-med mkha'- 'gro'i chos-skor, ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma),* although literally it appears to read 'bodyless ḍākas' who are the male equivalent of the ḍākinīs. This is a teaching which Marpa only partially received from Nāropa and which Rechungpa, on Milarepa's instruction, went to India to obtain in full from Tipupa, a successor in Nāropa's lineage.

The spelling of Nyengyu occurs as both *sNyan-rgyud* and *sNyan-brgyud*. In the latter case the meaning is 'oral transmission'. However, we find that a number of authors are specific about retaining the spelling *rgyud* to mean Tantra. For example, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa *('Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa)* uses the term *snyan-rgyud* but for lineage uses *brgyud,* even in the same sentence: *snyan-rgyud nor-bu'i skor-gsum ring-brgyud:* 'the long lineage of the trilogy of the Karṇatantra Jewel'. Tsangnyön specifically states that *Karṇatantra* is the equivalent in the language of Oḍḍiyāna for *sNyan-rgyud*.

The Sanskrit for *brgyud* or lineage *paramparā,* as in the title of a canonical text by Tilopa,[6] which contains the words *mukhakarṇa-paramparā* translated as *zhal nas snyan du brgyud-pa,* which means 'A lineage [passed] from mouth to ear.' In contrast, the title of a text by Nāropa[7] contains the word Karṇatantra, which has, nevertheless, been translated as *sNyan-brgyud,* though this may be a scribal corruption, which is very common in Tibetan. Also, as *snyan-brgyud* is a more familiar term, it is common for

Tibetans to assume that *ssnyan-rgyud* should be spelled as *snyan-brgyud,* so that when they hear the term *Rechung Nyengyu,* it is commonly assumed to mean 'the oral transmission of Rechungpa' and not 'Rechungpa's Karṇatantra'.

Marpa, who was the origin of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet, was a householder, but Milarepa and Rechungpa, as their names suggest, were *repa (ras-pa)*. *Repas* had few possessions and lived in caves and huts, dependent upon the limited patronage of villagers. They were dedicated to meditation practice and not scholarship. The term *repa* later fell into disuse, being replaced by 'Naljorpa' *(rnal-'byor-pa),* the Tibetan equivalent of 'yogin', to mean a non-monastic, non-householder practitioner. *Ras* means cotton, and *pa* is a substantiative. A *repa* is therefore 'someone who wears cotton', refering to someone who has mastered the practice of *caṇḍālī* *(gtum-mo)*. This practice results in an experience of bliss and physical warmth, enabling the practitioner to wear only cotton even in cold weather. It is the mark of accomplishment in the biographies of pupils of Milarepa that they are 'able to wear [only] cotton'. The word Kagyu *(bKa'-brgyud),* which means 'lineage of instructions', is sometimes spelt *dKar-brgyud,* in the Drukpa Kagyu school, meaning 'the white lineage', referring to the *repa's* cotton costume. However, this does not mean that they never wore anything but a cotton robe. A biography of Khyungtsangpa describes the aged Rechungpa as wearing his cotton robe over clothing made of felt. Contemporary *caṇḍālī* masters also wear cotton over felt clothing, eschewing warmer clothes such as sheepskin, however much they may seem to complain about cold weather.[8]

The fifth volume of the *The Treasury of Instructions (gDams-ngag-mdzod)* by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (*'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul bLo-gros mTha'-yas,* 1813–99) categorises the Karṇatantra lineages in the following manner:

1 The elaborate form: the Rechung Nyengyu *(Ras-chung sNyan-rgyud),* transmitted through Rechungpa's principal pupils.
2 The medium form: the Demchok Nyengyu *(bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud)* lineage, transmitted from Rechungpa via Milarepa to Ngendzong Tönpa *(Ngan-rdzong sTon-pa)* and on through his successors.
3 The brief form: the Dakpo Nyengyu *(Dwags-po sNyan-rgyud),* taught by Rechungpa to Dakpo Lharjé *(Dwags-po lHa-rje)* a.k.a Gampopa, and transmitted through his Dakpo Kagyu succession.

Rechungpa's three principal pupils in his own community of followers, who were also involved in the creation of his earliest biography, were:

1 Sumpa *(Sum-pa),* who is also known as Sumtön *(Sum-ston),* Tsangpa Sumpa *(gTsang-pa Sum-pa)* and Dampa Sumpa *(Dam-pa Sum-pa)*.
2 Gyal-lo *(rGyal-lo)*.
3 Yang-gön *(Yang-dgon),* a.k.a Tönpa Yangdak Pal *(sTon-pa Yang-dag dPal)* and Sang-gyé Tön *(Sangs-rgyas sTon)*.

Sumpa, who was a twenty-year old monk when he first met Rechungpa, was noted for his devotion to him. He burned away a ring finger as an offering to Rechungpa, prostrated whenever they met and became his personal attendant. In reciprocation, Rechungpa

would never teach in his absence. Sumpa became Rechungpa's successor at his seat in Loro.[9]

There was another principal pupil who was not a part of this community. Khyungtsangpa (*Khyung-tshang-pa,* 1115–76) was a secret monk disciple, who established a community independent from that of Rechungpa's. It is this branch of the Rechung Nyengyu, however, that has the greater number of lineage histories and literature. This transmission is distinctive for having two female teachers in its succession during its early centuries: Machik Angcho *(Ma-cig Ang-co)* and Rema Shigmo *(Ras-ma Zhig-mo)*.[10]

Contemporary Kagyupa schools are part of the Dakpo Kagyu *(Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud)* tradition founded by Gampopa (1079–1153) *(sGam-po-pa)* a.k.a Dakpo Lharjé *(Dwags-po lHa-rje),* who was another pupil of Milarepa's. Gampopa was not a *repa* like Milarepa's other principal pupils, but a monk from the Kadampa *(bKa'-gdams-pa)* tradition founded by Atiśa Dipaṃkāra (982–1054), who came to Tibet in 1042, and by his Tibetan pupil Dromtön *('Brom-ston)* (1005–64). Gampopa provided Milarepa's teachings with a monastic and scholastic setting. The Dagpo Kagyu tradition diversified into numerous independent lineages within which were written texts dedicated to their own histories, which were known as *sertreng (gSer-'phreng)* 'garlands of gold', each presenting that particular lineage as the mainstream of the Kagyu succession. There are also histories of Kagyu lineages that are not descended from Gampopa or Rechungpa, such as those of Marpa's pupil Ngoktön *(rNgog-ston)*.

The Rechung Nyengyu lineages continued independently on a small scale, but the transmission of its practices also formed a part of certain Dakpo Kagyu traditions, particularly the Drukpa Kagyu and the Talung Kagyu, the former being a principal preserver of Rechungpa biographies.

Tsangnyön Heruka's famous works emphasise Gampopa's primacy as Milarepa's successor: Gampopa is 'the sun-like pupil' while Rechungpa is secondary, being only 'the moon-like pupil'. The earlier biographies of Milarepa are now mostly forgotten and therefore Rechungpa's pre-eminence in them remain largely unknown.

The available sources examined in this book form four principal phases in relation to the evolution of the Rechungpa and Milarepa narratives:

1 The earliest phase, from the twelfth to the thirteenth century: The appearance of localised narrative traditions that are independent of each other.
2 Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries: Independent traditions merge in various ways to create new syncretic traditions.
3 The end of the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries: What were to become the standard biographical or historical works are created from the earlier works.
4 The seventeenth century to the present day: The modern Tibetan tradition of the last three centuries, which are usually summarizes the standard works.

The available sources comprise biographies *(rnam-thar),* histories of Buddhism *(chos-'byung);* Kagyu lineage histories, and initiation texts *(dbang-dpe)* that contain a history of a specific practice. We witness the transmission of narrative units—such details of the story as places, actions, people and objects—and also textual replication, with phrases or sentences repeated with varying degrees of modification, as it was a common practice for Tibetan authors to repeat the contents of earlier texts.

Tibet had its own distinctive tradition of narrative, folklore, songs and historical records. In a predominantly illiterate society, the oral transmission of song-punctuated narrative was common, with characters indulging in song-dialogues even in the most unlikely circumstances, which we shall also see in these works.

Tibetan religious biographies are normally called 'namthar' *(rnam-thar)* ('liberation'), as its primary subject is a person's attainment of liberation. This term is derived from the Sanskrit *vimokṣa* and the use of this term in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra,* which was first translated into Tibetan in the eighth century by Paltsek *(dPal-brtsegs)* and revised in the eleventh century by, among others, Rinchen Zangpo *(Rin-chen bZang-po)* and Ngok Loden Sherab *(rNgog Blo-ldan Shes-rab)*. Those two translators and the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* were of great importance for the Kadampa *(bKa'-gdams-pa)* tradition. The term occurs in verse 103 of the fifth chapter, where Śantideva advises the reader to learn about reliance on the guru by reading the *Śrī-sambhava-vimokṣa*:

> One should learn behaviour towards the guru
> From *The Liberation of Glorious Sambhava*.
>
> Sanskrit:
> Śrī-sambhava-vimokṣāc ca śikṣadyad guru-vartanam
> Tibetan translation:
> dPal-'byung-ba yi *rnam-thar* las
> Bla-ma bsten-pa'i tshul ltar bslab

Even the Sanskrit commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (also known by the shorter title *Bodhicaryāvatāra*) are not particularly illuminating as to this reference. Prajñākaramati,[11] Vairocanarakṣita[12] and Vibhūticandra[13] merely state that the text is a *parivarta* (meaning chapter or section) of the *Gandhavyuha Sūtra*.[14] *Parivarta* was translated into Tibetan as *le'u,* which specifically means a chapter. The 'chapters' of this sūtra are however without titles, or even a designation as chapters. The *Gandhavyuha Sūtra* itself forms the concluding section of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. The *Gandhavyuha Sūtra* describes Sudhana going from one teacher to another climaxing in his fifty-third teacher, Samantabhadra. It is evident that Śantideva was referring to the fifty-first 'chapter', in which Sudhana receives a teaching from *two* teachers—a male named Śrī Śrī Saṃbhava and a female named Śrī Mati, who teach him in one voice, using the Sanskrit first person dual case in referring to themselves. A present Sanskrit edition of the sūtra has as page headings for this section the 'title' *Śrī-Saṃbhava Śrī-matiś ca* (Glorious Sambhava and Glorious Mati). Most of their teaching is comprised of a lengthy paean to the *kalyāṇamitra* *(dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen),* 'friend of virtue' which is a synonym for guru, and the benefits to be gained from following one. It includes a series of similes concerning the teacher, his teaching, his pupil and the practice. One of these similes is

that these four should be seen, respectively, as doctor, patient, medicine and treatment, an analogy still widely used in Tibetan teachings to this day, even though its source in the sūtras is usually not known. It is a common saying in Tibet that the commentaries are more important than the original sūtras, which are used principally as objects for devotion. Therefore it is not unusual for a teacher of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* to have never read this section of the *Gandhavyuha-sūtra*. In fact, even Prajñakaramati, who is regarded as the principal Indian commentator on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra,* appears to forget Śrī Mati in stating that the teachings in this section were given by Śrī Saṃbhava alone. Tibetan readers assumed that *The Liberation of Glorious Sambhava* was an actual title and that it refers to a biography. This misunderstanding continues, as evidenced in the recent free translation of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* by the Padmakara translation group

> For thus you must depend upon your guru
> As you will find described in Shrī Sambhava's life.

This section of the sūtra does not in fact contain a biography of either Sambhava or Mati. What then does *vimokṣa* mean in Śantideva's phrase *Śrī-Sambhava-vimokṣa?* The compound *bodhisattva-vimokṣa* is used throughout this sūtra to describe the practices, each of which has a specific name, through which Sudhana's teachers gained their liberation, and which they teach to Sudhana who then practices them. For example, in the fifteenth chapter, a goddess teaches Sudhana the *bodhisattva-vimokṣa* called 'the entry into manifestations and beautiful sounds' *(sgra yid-du-'ong-ba dang rnam-par-'phrul-ba zab-mo la 'jug-pa)*.[15] This use of the term *namthar* or 'liberation' is still to be found in the early Kagyu. Gampopa's nephew and successor, Gomtsul *(sGom-tshul),* compiled Gampopa's general lectures into a text named *A Garland of Pearls: Dharma Lectures (Tshogs-chos Mu-tig gi Phreng-ba)*.[16] In its colophon, which describes how faithful and reliable this collection is, Gomtsul states that these teachings have not been mixed with other 'liberations' *(rnam thar gzhan dang ma 'dres par…),* that is, methods for the attainment of liberation.[17]

In the Saṃbhava and Mati section of the *Gandhavyuha Sūtra,* the term *vimokṣa* occurs three times in its opening passages, where the two teachers describe a *bodhisattva-vimokṣa* that is named *mayāgata:* the realisation that everything is an illusion. Sambhava and Mati state that they themselves learned and mastered it. As Sudhana receives *bodhisattva-vimokṣas* from all his fifty-three teachers, it would be natural for Santideva or other Indian authors to refer to each section as the *vimokṣa* of such and such a teacher.

Kadampa scholars memorised the Tibetan translation of the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* in its entirety, and as 'the liberation of Sambhava' is one of the few texts mentioned in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* it became a well-known title that was assumed to be a biography. It could be argued that as the practice and realisation of the *vimokṣa* was the

principal event in those teachers' lives, even someone familiar with the sūtra could have opted to borrow 'liberation' *(rnam-thar)* as the term for a religious biography.

Thus, while early biographies in the Sakya *(Sa-skya)* tradition are normally termed 'histories' *(lo-rgyus),* the term 'liberation' *(rnam-thar)* is used in the early Kadampa biographies of masters such as Rinchen Zangpo, Atiśa and Dromtön. It could be argued that these are later interpolations, but we find that Gampopa, the earliest Kagyu biographer, whose literary activities are the fruit of his Kadampa training, uses this term for his biograsphies of Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa and Milarepa. .

2
THE BIOGRAPHIES

This chapter can be used as a source of reference. Readers can, if they wish, pass over this chapter and refer back to it as texts are mentioned in the following chapters. However, four texts that have served as sources are not included in this chapter because of their crucial importance in the evolution of the biographies of Milarepa, and are therefore in that chapter instead. These four texts are the biographies of Milarepa by Gampopa, Lama Shang and Tsangnyön Heruka, and also Tsangnyon Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.

Lost biographies of Rechungpa by his contemporaries

The following texts appear to be no longer extant in their original form, but the existence of texts (1), (2), (3) and (5) are attested to by Götsang Repa, while the existence of text (4) is implied by Gyadangpa:

1 During Rechungpa's lifetime, his pupil, Yangdak Pal (Yang-dag dPal), wrote about the latter part of his life.
2 During Rechungpa's lifetime, 'the scholar from Drin *(Brin)'* wrote about Rechungpa's early life.
3 Sumpa used these and other sources, under the supervision of Rechungpa himself, and his ex-wife, to compile a biography.
4 Khyungtsangpa (1115–76), Rechungpa's pupil, appears to have written a memoir, either during or shortly after Rechungpa's lifetime, which Gyadangpa used as a source in the thirteenth century.
5 In 1195, thirty-four years after Rechungpa's death[1] and twenty-one years after Khyungtsangpa's death, Sumpa expanded the biography he had compiled during Rechungpa's lifetime (text 3), to form *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*.

The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel

The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel dates from 1195. It was the primary source for two sixteenth-century texts, written by pupils of Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507). These authors were Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal)* (1473–1557), who completed his life of Rechungpa in 1503, and Götsang Repa *(rGod-tshang Ras-pa),* who completed his version in or near 1531. These two authors state that *The Essence of a*

Wonderful Jewel was not their sole source, but they neither name their other sources nor indicate when they are being used. A comparison of the Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa versions reveals that they used the same source in describing the latter part of Rechungpa's life, following his final departure from Milarepa, which forms the larger part of both texts. Rinchen Namgyal's version reads like a summary of the corresponding part in Götsang Repa. Therefore, Rinchen Namgyal was presumably summarizing from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* while Götsang Repa made a predominantly verbatim reproduction.

Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa differ considerably concerning significant incidents in the earlier part of Rechungpa's life, which takes up just under a half of the Götsang Repa version. For example, the miraculous details of Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa upon his final return from India vary considerably between these two texts, while the earliest surviving biography, that of Gyadangpa Dechen Dorje has a simple narrative devoid of miracles and with much less drama.

Götsang Repa reproduced Sumpa's colophon for *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* within his own text:

> The first part: from the beginning, and including the Tipupa chapter, etc., is derived from the writing of the Drin Scholar, which I, Sumtön, and the attendant Rinchen Drak later corrected with the guru himself, and rewrote.
>
> The middle part: the Lhachik chapter, and so on, is as told by the attendant [Rinchen Drak] and was later corrected with the guru and Lhachik, and then written out.
>
> The last part: the chapters on the earlier, middle, and later departures to Ü, and so on, are from:
>
> (i) The oral accounts given by the lord guru himself.
> (ii) The oral accounts and notes of his long-term pupils: the attendant Rinchen Drak, Geshe Khyungpo, Takshö Repa and other [spiritual] brothers that have been a long time at the lotus-feet of the lord guru.
> (iii) The writings of Yangdak Tön, which were a compilation of what we three—the senior and junior [spiritual] brothers—had seen, heard and remembered.
>
> I, Sumtön, compiled this into one work. It was subsequently checked and corrected by the lord guru. In addition, I, Sumpa, added the chapter on miscellaneous teachings, which were derived from the notes made by Gyal-lo.
>
> I, Sumpa, composed this life-story of the lord guru, entitled *The Essence of the Wonderful Jewel,* in the wood-hare year (1195).[2]

This colophon demonstrates that Rechungpa's own pupils considered Tipupa, Lhachik and three visits to Ü as significant episodes in his early life.

Sumpa does not provide a name—only a general epithet and homeland—for the author of the earliest part of Rechungpa's life. No one from Drin—a place Rechungpa often visited with Milarepa—appears in the various lists of Rechungpa's pupils.

Gyal-lo's record of his question and answer sessions with Rechungpa was not used by Rinchen Namgyal, but is reproduced in full by Götsang Repa.[3]

The 'three senior and junior [spiritual] brothers' are Sumpa himself, Yangdak Pal and Gyal-lo. Yangdak Pal's compilation must have provided his and Sumpa's first-person accounts of Rechungpa's last days.

The other two sources mentioned in *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel's* colophon are Geshe Khyungpo (not to be confused with Khyungtsangpa) and Takshö Repa *(sTag-shod Ras-pa)*. The latter was one of Rechungpa's later attendants and a subsequent lineage holder.[4]

Sumpa does not refer to the biography written by Khyungtsangpa who had died twenty years earlier in 1176. That biography did not—from the evidence of Gyadangpa—include Rechungpa's death, which corresponds with his having been a secret pupil who went to live at a great distance without any further contact with Rechungpa's community, not declaring himself a pupil until after Rechungpa's death. His pupil Lingrepa, who is the source of the Drukpa Kagyu, therefore had doubts whether he was genuine until he received the same instructions from Sumpa.

Donmo Ripa: *The Great Kagyu Biographies (bKa'-brgyud kyi rnam-thar chen-mo)*

Author: Dorje Dzé-ö *(rDo-rje mDzes-'od)*. Date: after 1344, including a text dictated by Ritrö Wangchuk *(Ri-khrod dBang-phyug)* (1181–1255) and written down by Donmo Ripa *(Don-mo Ri-pa)* (1203–76 or 1288) in circa 1245. *Full title:* The Great Kagyu Biographies: A Treasury of Jewels that is the Source of all that is Desired *(bKa'-brgyud kyi rnam-thar chen-mo rin-po-che'i gter-mdzod dgos-'dod 'byung-gnas)*.

Dorje Dzé-ö was a Drigung Kagyupa, active in the mid-fourteenth century, who compiled an account intended to inspire faith in a west-Tibetan Drigung lineage. The Drigung Kagyu was founded by Kyobpa Jigten Gönpo (*'Bri-khung sKyob-pa 'Jig-rten mGon-po),* also known as Drigungpa (1143–1217).[5] Drigungpa met Pamo Drupa *(Phag-mo Gru-pa),* the pupil of Gampopa who founded the Padru Kagyu, in 1167,[6] less than three years before Pamo Drupa's death. He later founded Drigung monastery, from which there came an intial diversification of local lineages, as described in *The Lhorong History of the Dharma*.[7] One was this lineage of Ritrö Wangchuk.[8]

The text does not have a biography of Rechungpa, but he appears within the life-story of Milarepa, a great deal of which is reproduced from the Gampopa text described in Chapter 3. It is indicated within the text that the first seven biographies were written by Donmo Ripa on the dictation of Ritrö Wangchuk *(Ri-khrod dBang-phyug)* between 1244 and 1246, making it the earliest surviving unmodulated account of Rechungpa.

Editions

The 1981 Delhi edition of the text is described, in its 'introduction' *(gleng-brjod)* on page 527, as having been edited by Drangmé Yoretsang Tsöndru Seng-ge *(sBrang-smad Yo-red-tshang 'Byung-gnes Seng-ge),* who corrected mistakes and incorrect Sanskrit

transliterations in the text, but left obscure archaisms and colloquialisms as he found them. Therefore, there are frequent archaic spellings and obscure vocabulary. That edition was based on a manuscript from Dzongpel Gyeling *(mDzongs-'phel rGyas-gling)* monastery in Chilema *(Phyi-sle-ma)* in Nepal, a photocopy of which is in the Gene Smith collection.

Authorship and date

The final part of the text was omitted in Könchok Gyaltsen's translation. He ends with the biography of Drigungpa, without any indication that the text continues with the life-story of his pupil Ritrö Wangchuk (1181–1252)[9] and his lineage in the far west of Tibet.

Könchok Gyaltsen erroneously states that the text's author, Dorje Dzé-ö, was a pupil of Ritrö Wangchuk.[10] Ritrö Wangchuk[11] (1181–1255)[12] is a general appellation for a hermit meditator, meaning 'Lord of the Mountains'. His monastic name was Seng-ge Yeshe *(Seng-ge Ye-shes)*.[13] However, neither of the names, nor an account of his life under another name, occurs in *The Blue Annals'* enumeration of Jikten Sumgön's twenty principal pupils, nor in the detailed description of the early Drigung Kagyu in the *Lhorong History of the Dharma,* which seems to indicate a complete eclipse of the western tradition. However, this text portrays Ritrö Wangchuk as Drigungpa's principal pupil:

> The one who is unrivalled amongst those pupils, the beautiful [spiritual] son who is in the Dharma Lord's mind, the sole [spiritual] son who holds his lineage, accomplishing the [guru's] intentions perfectly.[14]

Ritrö Wangchuk was born in the iron-ox year of 1181[15] and died in his seventy-fifth year in a hare year,[16] which is the wood-hare of 1255. He was present when Drigungpa died in 1217, and subsequently went to Kailash with Drigung Ling Sherab Jungné (*'Bri-gung gLing Shes-rab 'Byung-gnas,* 1187–1241) in 1219. Roberto Vitali, in his *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.Hrang,* ties in this journey of 1219 with the local history of Puhrang *(Pu.hrang),* confirming this date.[17] Donmo Ripa wrote most of Ritrö Wangchuk's life-story. The section he wrote ends with a note, perhaps by Dorje Dze-ö, that says 'Up to this point was written by Donmo Ripa.'[18] This authorship is confirmed by such phrases within the biography as 'I, Donmo Ripa, and the precious lama' *(bla ma rin po che dang bdag don mo ri pa)*.[19] My edition does include an interlinear addendum in which *bdag* is qualified by Dorje Dzé-ö,[20] but this is clearly an error. The remaining pages of the biography describe the last nine years of Ritrö Wangchuk's life (1246–55).[21] The conclusion of the Donmo Ripa section describes how Ritrö Wangchuk dictated to him all the earlier biographies, so that it appears that the entire text, and not just Ritrö Wangchuk's biography, up to that point was written by Donmo Ripa, and one could even ascribe authorship of the earlier biographies to Ritrö Wangchuk himself:

> One day, in the Dra-ok *(Bra-'og)* cave hermitage, I asked permission to make a written record of the histories or life-stories of the Kagyu lamas exactly as [he] told them. He said, 'That would be good and so write down in one text a little of the histories of the Kagyu lamas exactly as I

> tell them.' Then I wrote down the lives of the great gurus without addition or subtraction, exactly as related by the precious lama, for the sake of those [ordinary beings] who can only see this life.[22]

According to the biography of Donmo Ripa,[23] *(Don-mo Ri-pa),* which follows that of Ritrö Wangchuk, he was born in the water-pig year of 1203[24] and died in a rat year[25] that could be 1264, 1276 or 1288. Donmo Ripa met Ritrö Wangchuk at Changchub Ling *(Byang-chub gLing)* in the bird year of 1237, when Ritrö Wangchuk was 56. The last date given by Donmo Ripa is the middle autumn month (i.e. eighth month) of the dragon year of 1244, in approximately October. When Dorje Dzé-ö continues the story, he mentions the spring of the horse year of 1246. Therefore Donmo Ripa's account of Ritrö Wangchuk's life, and presumably all the earlier biographies, would have been composed in 1245.

Ritrö Wangchuk was a pupil of Drigungpa, and therefore only the third in a spiritual succession after Gampopa, which makes the text's dependence upon the Gampopa text less surprising, and makes it the earliest source of biographical information on Rechungpa.

Dorje Dzé-ö continues his *Great Kagyu Biographies* with pupils of Donmo Ripa, in particular, Chundorwa *(Chun-'dor-ba)* (1241–1322), and ends with Chundorwa's pupil and Dorje Dze-ö's own teacher: Legden Yeshe *(Legs-ldan Ye-shes)* (1263–1344).

Gyadangpa: *The Biographies of a Garland of Golden Mountains (gSer-ri'i 'Phreng-ba'i rNam-par Thar-pa)*

Author: Gyadangpa Dechen Dorje (rGya-ldang-pa bDe-chen rDo-rje). Date: circa 1258–66.

This early account of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage contains an early biography of Milarepa and the earliest surviving independent biography of Rechungpa. It was composed by Gyadangpa Dechen Dorje and is entitled:

> A Compilation of Chapters that are brief summaries of biographies of a garland of golden mountains of previous siddhas: the glorious Dakpo Kagyu's Druk Ralung succession, which is the precious teaching of the Glorious Summer-drum,[26] the lineage of the [ultimate] meaning, up until Dharma Lords Önré and Götsangpa.[27]

This text is a lineage history that commences with the origins of the Kagyu lineage in India and culminates with two pupils of Tsangpa Gyaré, the founder of the Drukpa Kagyu tradition.

The Drukpa Kagyu lineage is of particular relevance for Rechungpa and his hagiographers. Lingrepa Pema Dorje *(Gling-ras-pa Padma rDo-rje)* (1128–88) before becoming a pupil of Gampopa's pupil Pamo Drupa, had previously been a pupil of two of Rechungpa's pupils—Khyungtsangpa and Sumpa.[28] Therefore the Rechungpa teachings,

as well as the Padru teachings, were transmitted to Lingrepa's principal pupil: Tsangpa Gyaré Yeshe Dorje *(gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rDo-rje)* (1161–1211). Tsangpa Gyaré also discovered what were said to be teachings concealed under the ground by Rechungpa—*The Six Teachings on Equal Taste (ro-snyoms skor drug)*—which are central to the Drukpa Kagyu transmission.[29] According to Pema Karpo, Tsangpa Gyaré had been on solitary retreat for three years and eighteen 'moons', which here may refer to waxing and waning moons, meaning nine months. His behaviour was causing concern, so that a Logom Repa *(Klog-sgom Ras-pa)* came to see him, concerned that Tsangpa Gyare was losing his mind, perhaps through too little nourishment or excessive cold, but in reply Tsangpa Gyare sang a song of seven kinds of happiness. At that time, Saraha appeared to Tsangpa Gyaré in a dream, giving him instructions on meditation and telling him he would discover a 'treasure' *(gter)*. Tsangpa Gyaré meditated on these instructions and on a later night dreamed of a white man carrying an arrow adorned in silk streamers. The man said to him, 'Hey, you're Nāropa! Don't you remember? Now your teachings are "the six teaching on equal taste" *(ro snyoms skor drug),* which are the quintessence of the tantras, and are in this rock wall' and he stuck his arrow into the rock. Tsangpa Gyaré immediately woke up, remembered his previous lives and extracted the treasure *(gter)* from the rock. He copied it out completely and then replaced the original text into the rock and assigned local deities to guard it. Interestingly, here these teachings are only identified as Nāropa's, without any mention of Rechungpa, or who concealed them.[30] The Drukpa Kagyu, unlike other Kagyu traditions, principally practise Vajravārāhī according to Rechungpa's tradition, and the Karṇatantra *(sNyan-rgyud)* practices are specifically maintained. Also, the Drukpa monasteries in Ladakh have been of great value in preserving manuscripts, such as that of Gyadangpa.

Tsangpa Gyaré established the Druk monastery that gave the school its name. Tsangpa Gyaré's successor was his own nephew, Önré Darma Seng-ge *(dBon-ras Dar-ma Seng-ge)* (1177–1237/8), and the succession based at that monastery became known as 'the Bar Druk' *(Bar-'brug),* which means the 'middle' or 'central' Drukpa.

Tsangpa Gyaré is also known, retrospectively, as the first Drukchen *('Brug-chen)* after the Bar Druk adopted succession by incarnation some centuries later. The second Drukchen, Gyalwang Kunga Paljor *(rGyal-dbang Kun-dga' dPal-'byor)* (1428–76), who is one of our authors, began this succession by recognising himself as the rebirth of Tsangpa Gyaré. Another two holders of the Drukchen title are important sources on Rechungpa's life: the third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa *('Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa)* (1478–1523) and the fourth Drukchen, Pema Karpo (*Pad-ma dKar-po,* 1527–92).

The Gyadangpa text uses the archaic spelling of Milarepa's name: *Mid-la Ras-pa* instead of *Mi-la Ras-pa,* which is also found in such texts as *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and the fifteenth century *The Blue Annals*.

Sufficient time had passed since Rechungpa's death for the historical reliability of his biography in this volume to be questionable. This is evident when we compare Gyadangpa's version of Milarepa's life[31] with that of the earlier works by Gampopa, Lama Shang and Donmo Ripa.

The text appears to have survived as just one manuscript written in the umay *(dbu-med)* script and preserved in the library of Hemis Monastery, a Drukpa Kagyu monastery in Ladakh. In 1973, in Himachal Pradesh, Khamtrul Rinpoche *(Khams-sprul Rin-po-che),*

a Drukpa Kagyu master in exile from Tibet, reproduced that text under the title *Dkar Brgyud Gser' Phreng: A thirteenth Century Collection of Verse Hagiographies of the Succession of Eminent Masters of the 'Brug-pa Dkar-brgyud-pa Tradition*.

The structure of Gyadangpa's text

The text is a collection of twelve separate biographies, one of which was not authored by Gyadangpa. It does not have the form of a single work with one final colophon, as is found in later Sertreng *(gSer-'phreng),* which are Kagyu lineage histories. Instead, as with Lama Shang, each biography has its own colophon. But it is closer in form to the later Sertreng than Lama Shang's work, for the biographies form a lineage succession. It concludes with the biographies of two contemporaries, although one was also a teacher of the other. As they are the sources of separate lineages, later histories omit one or the other accordingly. One anomaly is that though the text is an account of a lineage transmission from Gampopa, it includes a biography of Rechungpa. This anomaly will continue in later Drukpa Kagyu lineage histories, because of the importance of Rechungpa's teachings in this lineage.

The early part of the Gyadangpa biography of Milarepa appears to be an unhomogenised mixture of different textual traditions, with Milarepa's father dying twice and the family falling into destitution three times.

The identity of Gyadangpa

The title page of the Khamtrul publication gives the name of the author as Gyalthangpa *(rGyal-thang-pa)* Dechen Dorje, as does the short English preface anonymously written by E.Gene Smith. This version of the author's name is derived from the scribe's colophon, which occurs at the end of the manuscript.

At the conclusion of all eleven biographies, however, the author gives his name as Gyadangpa *(rGya-ldang-pa),* not Gyalthangpa *(rGyal-thang-pa)*. In medieval Tibetan *rGya-ldang* and *rGyal-thang* may have been almost homophones, owing to the pronunciation of the super-fixed *la*. Place-names in Tibet are particularly susceptible to phonological and subsequently scribal variation, and even the same phoneme can have various spellings. Tibetan society was predominantly illiterate and Tibetan place-names have not only mutated, but have been replaced or disappeared. Tiso assumes that Gyadangpa was a native or resident of Gyalthang *(rGyal-thang),* a fertile plain in the southeastern extremity of the Tibetan plateau, corresponding to the present-day Gyalthang County in Yunnan. However, the place name Gyalthang (rgyal-thang) does appear within the Milarepa biography. It is one of a group of locations within northern Yeru (g.yas-ru byang) which also includes 'the cliffs of Chodrak' *(mchog brag kyi brag),* which is the same as 'the cave of Chodrak' *(mchog brag kyi phug)* that Donmo Ripa gives as the place where Milarepa and Rechungpa stayed after crossing the plain of Palthang *(dPal-thang),* which is not synonymous with Gyalthang for they are located in different counties. This passage in Milarepa occurs in the section that describes Milarepa's dwelling in the regions of Ngari *(mNga'-ris)* and Tsang *(gTsang)*. There is no mention of his entering central Tibet or Kham let alone Yunnan. The final sentence of the

biography uses the phrase *Zal-mo,* which Tiso took to refer to Kham, but it is an archaic expression used for Tibet in general, thus referring to Milarepa as a great yogin of Tibet.

In all but one of these colophons, that to the life of Tsangpa Gyaré,[32] Gyadangpa precedes his name with the epithets Ritrö Nedzin Ganggom *(Ri-khrod-gnas-' dzin Gangs-sgom)*. Tiso has interpreted the epithets that occur before his name to mean that Gyadangpa was the successor to Götsangpa's retreat centre, which was situated in a cave near Lhasa. However, *Ri-khrod* is unlikely to have the modern meaning of 'retreat'; the medieval meaning was simply 'mountains'. Therefore, Gyadangpa was simply referring to himself as 'one who dwells in the mountains, the meditator in the snows' a term that was used for other mendicant mountain-dwelling yogins (cf. Gyadangpa's use of the phrase *ri-khrod 'dzin-pa'i sgom-chen bu slob 'ga',* which means 'Some pupils who were meditators staying in the mountains').[33]

The English preface, which is anonymous, is in fact by E.Gene Smith, who notes that there is no biographical information on the author but states, though without specifying a source, that 'it is known that he was a disciple *of Rgod-tshang-pa Mgon-po-rdo-rje* [Götsangpa Gönpo Dorje]'.[34] However, Smith has informed me that he knows of no hard evidence to support that remark. At times he had to rely on unsubstantiated, and not always accurate, oral sources for his prefaces. Nevertheless, this identification is indeed likely, in that the final biography in this collection is of Götsangpa.

Though the names Ritröpa *(Ri-khrod-pa)* and Gangpa *(Gangs-pa)* appear in Gyadangpa's list of Götsangpa's nine principal pupils, their identity remains obscure and the list of Götsangpa's pupils varies significantly from text to text. There is a text attributed to Götsangpa himself, entitled *A Brief Account of the Drukpa Kagyu ('Brug-pa'i Lo-rgyus Zur-tsam),* which is contained in his collected works. It is classed by Dan Martin in Tibetan Histories as a 'brief and remarkably early history of the Drukpa Kagyu'.[35] The text however merely contains a quotation attributed to Götsangpa, which lists his pupils, but even that is suspect, perhaps through being corrupt. There are only eight pupils listed and even two of these names—Madunpa *(Ma-bdun-pa)* and Dowoche *(mDo-bo-che)*—should have been written as one. Gyadangpa's identity therefore remains a mystery.

The Date

The last biography in Gyadangpa's text is of Götsangpa, who is the starting point for the Tö Druk *(sTod-'Brug),* which is the Upper (i.e. Western) Drukpa Kagyu. There are indications that the text was written in the wake of Götsangpa's death, as there is a detailed account of Götsangpa's last days.

Gyadangpa states that Götsangpa's death occurred in the year of a horse, without, as later texts do, specifying the element that would place the year more specifically within a sixty-year cycle. Gyadangpa does not specify the elements of the year of Götsangpa's birth either, but the dates given in later histories—birth in the earth-bird year of 1189 and death in the earth-horse year of 1258—agree with Gyadangpa's chronology.

Gyadangpa did not compose the penultimate biography, which is of Sang-gye Önré *(Sangs-rgyas dBon-ras)* a.k.a Darma Seng-ge *(Dar-ma Seng-ge)* (1177–1237/8), who was Tsangpa Gyaré's nephew, the successor to his monastery, and founder of the Bar Druk *(Bar-'Brug)* or Central Drukpa Kagyu tradition. The author was Gelong Rinchen Sang-

gyé *(dGe-slong Rin-chen Sangs-rgyas),* a pupil of Sang-gyé Önré. In his colophon, Rinchen Sang-gyé states[36] that he wrote this biography at Ralung *(Rwa-lung),* the seat of Sang-gyé Önré, on the request of fellow pupils, and obtained information from Sang-gyé Önré's consort. It was therefore probably written not too long after Önré's death in 1237. Therefore the text would already have been at least twenty years old when Gyadangpa composed his biography of Götsangpa after that master's passing. The style of Gyadangpa's biographies (with the exception of Rechungpa's biography) is modelled on the Sang-gyé Önré biography. First, the life is described concisely in verse, and then each verse is repeated with a lengthy commentary. This is a literary form, based on Indian antecedents, which is normally used solely for scholarly works.

Zur Lekpa Gyaltsen *(Zur Legs-pa rGyal-mtshan),* the scribe of the Hemis manuscript of the Gyadangpa text, added his own colophon. He gives a lineage for the transmission of the text itself; it begins with 'rGyal-thang-pa', with himself as sixth and last in the succession.[37] The pictorial style of the manuscript was assumed by Smith to be of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century,[38] but this is probably too late for Gyadangpa to have written in the middle of the thirteenth century, since that would entail an average of about forty years between each transmission of the text. One would more reasonably expect the manuscript to date from the latter half of the fourteenth, or from the early fifteenth century.

Seven of the eleven texts by Gyadangpa were written on the request of Lobpön Gönpo Özer *(Slob-dpon mGon-po 'Od-zer)*. He is described in the colophon to the first of the texts—*Biographies of the Glorious Dakpo Kagyu (dPal-ldan Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa'i rNam-par-thar-pa)* as 'rich in the wealth of hearing and contemplating the scriptures, logic and practice instruction; one who definitely resides in meditation, and has perfect faith in the Kagyupa lamas'.[39] *The Blue Annals* lists only one lama of that name: he was the abbot of Sangpu *(dPal gSang-phu)* monastery, a.k.a Neutok *(Ne'u-thog)* monastery, which was founded in 1073 by Ngok Lekpay Sherab *(rNgog Legs-pa'i Shes-rab),* the uncle of Ngok Loden Sherab *(rNgog Blo-ldan Shes-rab)* the famous translator (1059–1109).[40] Gönpo Özer was abbot of this monastery for thirty-five years, until 1266, which was presumably the year of his death.[41] If this is the Gönpo Özer mentioned in the colophons, and the request was fulfilled after Götsangpa's death and while Gönpo Özer was alive, the text's date of composition would be between 1258 and 1266. There is however no conclusive evidence to identify these two names as referring to the same person.

In spite of having to rely solely on internal evidence, none of which is completely decisive, the strongest probability is that Gyadangpa was a pupil of Götsangpa, and that the text was written in the mid-thirteenth century.

The Rechungpa biography by Gyadangpa

The biography of Rechungpa by Gyadangpa appears to be at variance with the other biographies in his text for two reasons:

1 It is not written in the verse and commentary style of the others.
2 It is not a part of the lineal succession through Gampopa.

Its style suggests that *The Life of Rechungpa* may have been a final addition to this collection. The reader is at one point referred to the preceding *The Life of Milarepa,*[42] in order to read a song in full. However, the song is in fact not to be found there. This may be simply an error, or this biography of Rechungpa was originally a part of an earlier work by Gyadangpa.

Gyadangpa mentions no source for his *The Life of Rechungpa* other than Khyungtsangpa *(Khyung-tshang-pa),* who is mentioned twice in passing. Gyadangpa states that Khyungtsangpa described a meeting with Rechungpa's ex-wife when she was an elderly yogini.[43] There is also a reference to a song by Rongchungpa *(Rong-chung-pa)* that Khyungtsangpa had known but no longer remembered.[44] Gyadangpa was writing long after Khyungtsangpa's death in 1176 so he very likely had recourse to a now lost text by Khyungtsangpa, or a text that incorporated material from such a text. The absence of a description of Rechungpa's death implies that Gyadangpa did not have access to Sumpa's *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po)*.

Gyadangpa's *Life of Rechungpa* is divided into two sections:

1 An initial chapter entitled 'The qualities of hardship, which is connected with his family.'
2 The rest of the text, in seventeen chapters, is entitled 'The qualities of experience, which is connected with meditation.'

This division is also found in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* as well as later histories. It appears to be a form that these texts inherited along with common narrative content.

Demchok Nyengyu biographies

Date: compiled after 1360.

This is a history of a Nyengyu *(sNyan-brgyud)* lineage that was transmitted from Rechungpa through Khyungtsangpa. It concludes with the life of Drogön Zijipa *('Gro-mgon gZi-brj id-pa),*[45] which is preceded by the life of Jatangpa *(Bya-btang-pa)*. In Tsangnyön Heruka's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra,* however, the sequence is reversed, with an additional lama, Khenpo Wangchuk Sherab *(mKhan-po dBang-phyug Shes-rab),* in between these two.

This discrepancy appears to be explained when calculating the dates of these masters, for it appears that although Drogön Zijipa received teachings from Jatangpa, he was both older than him and outlived him. Drogön Zijipa's dates can be calculated to be 1290–1360. Therefore, the text was probably compiled shortly after 1360. The text states that the lineage continued to be active throughout central and eastern Tibet.

The Rechungpa biography is comprised of the entire Gyadangpa biography of Rechungpa repeated verbatim (with fewer scribal errors than in our edition of Gyadangpa), but without its colophon and with no reference to Gyadangpa as the source. It here forms the chapter entitled *The History of Lord Rechungpa* within a section entitled *Incomplete collection of biographies of masters in the transmission lineage of the Rechung Nyengyu teachings.*[46]

The text survived as an *umay (dbu-med)* manuscript in the library of Takna *(sTag-sna)* monastery, Ladakh. In 1983, Kagyu Sungrab Nyamso Khang in Darjeeling, an organisation dedicated to the revival of Kagyu literature, reproduced it as *Demchok Nyengyu (bDe-mchog sNyan-brgyud) Biographies*.

The redaction of the Demchok Nyengyu Biographies presumably occurred soon after the death of the last lineage figure whose life is recorded in that text—Drogön Zijipa (1290–1360).

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (bKa'-brgyud yid-bzhin nor-bu yi 'phreng-ba)

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (bKa'-brgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi 'Phreng-ba) was published in India in 1972 from a manuscript from the library of Kangyur Rinpoche. It is a somewhat haphazard compilation of life stories, which includes an edition of Gampopa's *The Lives of Marpa and Mila (Mar-pa dang Mi-la'i rNam-thar)*[47] that is peculiarly detached from Gampopa's *The Lives of Telopa and Nāropa (Telo dang Nāro'i rNam-thar),* to which it is an adjunct. This collection does not include a biography of Rechungpa, but does have a text named *The Life of Milarepa (Mi-la'i rnam-thar)*[48] within a series of biographies that culminates in the Drigung masters who comprise the succession of Drigung monastery—in contrast to Dorje Dze-ö's West-Tibetan Drigung tradition.

The Life of Milarepa has no author or date. One of the texts is a biography of Gar Dampa Chödingpa *('Gar Dam-pa Chos-sdings-pa)* (1180–1240),[49] a pupil of Drigung Jigten Gönpo *('Bri-gung 'Jig-rten mGon-po)* (1143–1217), which was composed by his nephew and successor, Ogyenpa *(O-rgyan-pa)*. A biography of Gar Dampa Chödingpa is also found in *The Blue Annals*.[50] In the published edition there is a conflation of this earlier Ogyenpa with the famous Ogyenpa Rinchen Pal *(O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dPal)* (1229/30–1309), who was a pupil of both Götsangpa *(rGod-tshang-pa)* and the second Karmapa.[51] Smith, trusting his Tibetan informants, assumed the entire collection to be by Ogyenpa Rinchen Pal and did not discover the error until after the publication. The biography of Gar Dampa Chödingpa was concluded in 1244. However, Smith dated this to 1304, a sixty-year cycle later, as a result of the mis-identification of the author. As there is no biography of any later figure, the compilation could possibly date as early as the middle of the thirteenth century.

The Life of Milarepa has atleast one element that connects it with the Donmo Ripa version. Milarepa's earliest name is given as Goyak *('Go-yags),* while in Donmo Ripa it is also Goyak, but with the alternative spelling *mGo-yag,* which the latter explains meant 'a good beginning' so that the second suffix *s* in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* is probably a corruption. Nevertheless, the majority of the narrative, though brief, is comprised of narrative elements that are close to the Gyadangpa version, with a high proportion of words and the occasional phrase in common. However, as will be explained later, this biography of Milarepa is based not upon Gyadangpa but on an even earlier common source, possibly Khyungtsangpa.

The narrative is condensed and has lost clarity; for example, in Gyadangpa, when Milarepa causes a building to collapse through his sorcery, the survivors become possessed, and speak as if they are Milarepa, declaring that he caused the accident, and

then they all die. In *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* the possession and deaths are omitted, making the narrative unclear. Also, there is no explanation of why Milarepa's name suddenly changes from Goyak *('Go-yags)* to Töpa Ga *(Thos-pa dGa')*.

Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, commencing with Vajradhara *(bKa'-brgyud kyi rNam-thar Thog-mar rDo-rje 'Chang gi rNam-thar nas Rim-par bZhugs so)*

Author: unknown. Date: after 1300.

This is a two-volume manuscript written in umay script. It was discovered by the Nepalese German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) in Tshum, in the north of Nepal and was photographed in 1994. The first volume (Ka-pa) has 365 folios with biographies commencing with Vajradhara and Saraha and culminating with Lorepa Wangchuk Tsöndru (*Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug bTson-'grus,* 1187–1250) and Götsangpa Gönpo Dorje (*rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rDo-rje,* 1189–1258), the founders, respectively, of the 'western' *(sMad)* and 'eastern' *(sTod)* traditions of the Drukpa Kagyu. The second volume *(Kha-pa)* is 329 folios long and has a group of biographies, such as that of Madunpa *(Ma-bdun-pa)* and his succession that does not seem to extend beyond the fourteenth century. At the commencement of this volume there is a prayer addressed to a number of lineages, but it names no lama who lived beyond the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is an important text in that unlike other versions that post-date Götsang Repa it preserves a biography of Rechungpa that demonstrates a distinct narrative transmission,[52] which appears to have been the basis for the version compiled within *The Golden Garland of the Ralung Kagyu (Rwa-lung gSer-phreng)*.

The Great Kagyu Golden Garland *(bKa'-brgyud gSer-phreng Chen-mo)*

Author: unknown. Date: compiled after 1838.

The last biography in the four volumes that comprise this lineage history is that of Rigdzin Chöying Dorje (*Rig-'dzin Chos-dbyings rDo-rje,* 1772–1838). It does not contain a biography of Rechungpa. However, the Milarepa biography contained within it[53] appears to be of a very early date and uses the same source that Gyadangpa used. It is more summarized than Gyadangpa, but less so than the version in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* ('bka'-rbgyud yid-bzhin Nor-buyi 'Phreng-ba).

The lost works of Latö Sherab Gönpo

The Blue Annals states that Latö Sherab Gönpo *(La-stod Shes-rab mGon-po)* composed biographies. He was a pupil of Gyaltsen Bum *(rGyal-mtshan 'Bum),* and many other teachers, such as the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339). Gyaltsen Bum was a pupil of Gyalwa Yang-gönpa, Götsangpa's principal pupil, although as Yang-gönpa died in the same year as Götsangpa, he may have received teachings from Götsangpa also.[54] *The Blue Annals* states that there existed a detailed biography of Latö Sherab Gönpo,[55] and *The History of The Dharma in Amdo* states that he wrote a text named *Biographies of the Kagyu Lamas (bKa'-brgyud bla-ma rnams kyi rnam-thar)*. Unfortunately, to date no copy of Latö Sherab Gönpo's biography or his works have come to light, though one would expect it to be related to the Gyadangpa narrative tradition.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGur-mchings dang bcas-pa)

Author: anonymous. Date: circa fourteenth century.

This important text is only known to survive in three copies, none of which has been published. There are two manuscripts and the incomplete photocopy of a sole surviving xylograph print that is now lost. One of the manuscripts has a blank title page and the other two versions have different titles. Yet the colophons of all three texts agree, apart from minor spelling variations, that the title is *dPal bZhad-pa'i*[56] *rdo-rje'i rnam-thar 'gur-chings*[57] *dang bcas pa (The Life of Glorious bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje, including a collection of his songs)*. Shepay Dorje was Milarepa's formal Dharma name that he received from Marpa.

In 1969, E.Gene Smith referred to the text, of which he had been unable to locate a copy in India, as 'the *Bu chen bcu gñis* biography of Mi-la Ras-pa', which means 'the twelve great sons' and described it as a major source for Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.[58]

Lhalungpa *(lHa-lung-pa),* in the introduction to his translation of *The Life of Milarepa* states that 'one notable version [of the life of Milarepa] was compiled by the twelve Great Disciples',[59] though he had not seen a copy of it. Both the above had received their information from Deshung Rinpoche, who had come to live in the USA, and who had examined the library of Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so)*. Lhalungpa states that Deshung had also seen a rare manuscript that may have been one of only two copies of the fifteenth-century biography by Shiché Ripa (referred to by Lhalungpa as *Zhi-byed Ras-pa* in error for *Zhi-byed Ri-pa*). The other copy was said to be kept at Chuwar monastery. Shiché Ripa's text does seem to have been, together with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* a principal source for another of our rare texts: *A River of Blessings*.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje includes chapters that are solely concerned with Rechungpa. The author is anonymous, but the colophon implies that he is a holder of Ngendzong's lineage of Rechungpa's teachings. However, this could be within the

context of another Kagyu lineage, particularly the Drukpa Kagyu. This appears to be indicated by the chapters on Gampopa.

Editions of The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje

The three unpublished versions of *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje (dPal bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGur-chings dang-bcas-pa)* are:

1 The Oxford manuscript, in the Bodleian library in Oxford, England.
2 The Newark manuscript, in the Newark library, New Jersey, USA.
3 The lost Stockholm xylograph, last seen in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Sweden.

1 *The Oxford manuscript* has no title on its title page. It is in 193 folios. The last folio is actually numbered as 192, but there are two consecutive pages that have both been numbered 126. There are frequent simple spelling errors, such as leaving off the second-suffix *sa*. It is listed as having been acquired in 1905. Ulrich Pagel has described the circumstances of its acquisition.

> A wave of new acquisitions reached Britain in 1905, consisting of books collected during the Younghusband campaign of 1904… The selection of the material took place under the supervision of Lieut. Col. L.A.Waddell. The selection criteria themselves had been defined by F.W.Thomas in a list of book desiderata compiled shortly before Younghusband set out on his mission…it took several months to assemble the material and prepare it for shipment to the UK (Waddell 1912). Every text had to be checked for completeness and physical condition before it was deemed suitable for transport. The majority of the collection was donated to the India Office Library. Other parts went to the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts, British Museum, the Bodleian Library and Cambridge University Library.[60]

The checking process in India was responsible for the somewhat worm-eaten slip of paper that now accompanies the manuscript in Oxford, identifying it as a biography of Milarepa and noting the errors in the Tibetan page numbering.

2 *The Newark manuscript* is entitled *The Profound Life of the great noble lord Milarepa (rJe-bstun mid-la ras-pa'i rnam-thar zab mo bzhugs so)*. It has 161 folios, with almost every page illustrated by colour drawings, which are occasionally merely decorative objects but usually delightful illustrations of the scenes being described. The earliest part of Milarepa's life, including his pupilage under Marpa, is not illustrated. It appears that the idea of illustrating the episodes was taken up after the work had commenced.

A missionary, probably Carter D.Holden or M.G.Griebenow, obtained this manuscript in 1933 from the Gelugpa Labrang *(Bla-brang)* monastery in Amdo.[61] Its Gelugpa background is evident from illustrations of Indian gurus wearing Gelugpa monastic dress,

and the appearance on folio 153b of Tsongkhapa *(gTsong-kha-pa),* the founder of the Gelugpa tradition.

The scribe's colophon (which is unreadable on the micro-film) makes a prayer that six deceased people gain buddhahood through the blessing of the text. It also prays for eleven living donors to be free of obstacles. However, the scribe gives no date or location for the work.

Page 1b, the reverse of the title page, has Vajradhara represented in the centre with Milarepa at the left end of the page (i.e. upon Vajradhara's right, the principal position) and Rechungpa at the right end (on Vajradhara's right, the secondary position). Dakpo Lharje *(Dwags-po Lha-rje),* that is Gampopa, appears upon page 2a, and therefore in a less prominent position than Rechungpa. This pictorial hierarchy gives a higher ranking to Rechungpa than to Gampopa, as would be expected of a text that has its origin in a lineage derived from Rechungpa.

There is considerable scribal corruption in the Newark manuscript, with words seriously misspelled or phrases omitted. A minor, less obvious example occurs within the title itself, when it is given in the colophon as *dPal bZhad-pa rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGul-chings dang-bcas-pa* ('The Life of Glorious bZhad-pa rDo-rje, with neck-adornment'), in which *mgul-chings* ('neck-adornment') is in error for the obscure term *mgur-chings,* meaning a collection of songs. I have not discovered the word *mgur-chings* in any other context. However, *chings* is used in compounds to refer to a summary, epitome or outline, as in *mdo-chings, bsdus-don gyi chings* and *spyi-chings*.

Both the Oxford and Newark manuscripts have interlinear emendations where haplographies have occurred, and the manuscripts mutually confirm the correctness of these interlinear emendations.

3 *The Stockholm xylograph* was last known to be located in the Folkens Museum Etnografiska in Stockholm. It is printed from a woodblock and it was an edition of this text that Deshung Rinpoche saw on his visit to Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so)* monastery in the middle of the twentieth century.[62] The monastery was founded at a site strongly associated with Milarepa. Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-gyal),* a prolific biographer and one of the principal pupils of Tsangnyön Heruka, founded this monastery and was active there in printing texts, though this blockprint is probably of a much more recent date. Its colophon states that it was printed in the region of Shambu *(Sham-bu)* mountain. Unfortunately it appears that the library and most of the printing-blocks may have been destroyed in the Cultural Revolution.

The only known surviving copy taken from this block was amongst a number of texts sold by the infamously mercantile Chini Lama of Bodhnath, Nepal, to Toni Schmid in the early 1960s. Her collection was normally inaccessible to study by Tibetologists, but E.Gene Smith briefly saw the text on a visit to Sweden in 1963. However, to demonstrate how foggy the landscape of this text has been, the concluding pages of a Gampopa text had been inadvertently added to the end of the text, and as it was in a similar xylographic style, Smith listed it in his notebook as a record *(zin-bris)* of Gampopa's teachings.[63] After her death in the 1970s, the collection was donated to the Folkens Museum Etnografiska in Stockholm, where it remained uncatalogued until my visit there.[64] Its cover-title is *The Life of Lord Mila Rechen: the Great Hundred Thousand Teachings compiled by the twelve repa siddhas (rJe-btsun Mid-la Ras-chen gyi rNam-thar bKa'-'bum Chen-mo Grub-thob Ras-pa bCu-gnyis kyis bsGrigs-pa)*.

The printer's colophon gives the text a slightly different title: *The Hundred-thousand Teachings of Great Ras-pa Mila of the Upper Snows, compiled by the twelve Repa Siddhas (Gangs-stod Mid-la Ras-chen gyi bKa'-'bum Chen-mo Grub-thob Ras-pa bCu-gnyis kyis bsGrigs-pa)*. The printer is named as Gu-na-ma-ti, that is, Guṇamati, which is the Sanskrit for Yonten Lodrö *(Yon-tan Blo-gros),* who was 'a great *repa* of the upper snows, a yogin from the Dakpo region in the east'. The text was printed in 'the solitary place of Shambu snow-mountain'.[65]

This edition of the text must therefore be the source for the title of *Twelve Sons (Bu-chen bCu-gnyis),* as reported by Deshung Rinpoche.

It appears to have 276 folios. The text was read and photocopied in the 1980s by Gudrun Hegardt, Its present where abouts is unknown. I was, thanks to the efforts of Hakan Wahlquist, the present curator with responsibility for the Tibetan collection, able to obtain an incomplete photocopy, from the collection itself and Gudrun Hegardt's uncatalogued texts in her possession. Almost all the photocopies have the extreme end of the lines on each page is missing. On going to press, two further editions have become available at the TBRC.

The Authorship of The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje

An examination of the colophon, identical in all three versions, establishes that the title of the Stockholm xylograph is erroneous in attributing its compilation to twelve great repa pupils of Milarepa.

The colophon[66] states:

> This Life [of Milarepa] has been written down, for the benefit of worthy meditators, as the words of Ngendzong Tönpa *(Ngan-rdzong sTon-pa)* Bodhirāja[67] and the other twelve great [spiritual] sons.
>
> rnam thar 'di skal ldan sgom[68] chen rnams kyi don du/[69] ngan rdzongs[70] ston pa bodhi[71] radza[72] la sogs pa'i ras pa bu chen bcu gnyis kyi yig ger[73] bkod-pa.

Bodhirāja is Sanskrit for Changchub Gyalpo *(Byang-chub rGyal-po),* which was Ngendzong Tonpa's personal name. Ngendzong Tönpa was the source of the Demchok Nyengyu *(bDe-mchog snyan-rgyud)* lineages. This emphasis upon him is an indication of the background for the creation of *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje*. In fact, the *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* includes within itself four short texts, complete with their titles and colophons, one of which was written by Ngendzong Tonpa alone, and the other three written by him in partnership with another of the twelve *repa* sons—Shiwa Ö *(Zhi-ba-'od)*. In the above colophon, the term 'twelve great repa sons' *(ras-pa bu-chen bcu-gnyis)* is qualified by the genitive particle, not the instrumental. They are not stated to be the compilers of this text (as the title of the Stockholm edition declares), rather it is their words, whether written or orally transmitted, that have been compiled. However, it is not purely written works that the compiler used to form *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje,* otherwise he would not have written of the danger

of this material being forgotten. The anonymous compiler confirms the significance of the emphasis on Ngendzong Tönpa when he declares which lineage this text has been written for—the Demchok Nyengyu (*['Khor-lo]-bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud;* Sanskrit: *Cakrasaṃvara-karṇatantra*):[74]

This has been written down in accordance with the lama's words,
For I was afraid that those with lesser intelligence [amongst]
The future lineage-holders of this wish-fulfilling jewel—
The lineage of the Karṇatantra of Cakrasamvara—might forget it.

snyan rgyud bde mchog[75] 'khor lo yi[76]/rgyud[77] pa yi bzhin nor bu[78]
'di[79]/ma 'ongs[80] gdung rgyud[81] 'dzin pa rnams/blo dman rjed[82] pas
'jigs pa'i phyir[83]/bla ma'i gsung[84] bzhin yi ger bkod/

The colophon is itself based upon the colophon[85] of the Ngendzong Tönpa text compiled as the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of part two. That text[86] describes the attack of demons at Chubar *(Chu-bar),* and Milarepa's encounter with the five Tseringma *(Tshe-ring-ma)* goddesses. This text dates the subjugation of the demons at Chubar to the water-dragon year (1112).[87] It is evidently the source for Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal's *('Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dPal)* statement, in *The Blue Annals* (completed in 1478), that, according to Ngendzong, that war with the demons took place in a water-dragon year.[88]

The compiler recycled significant phrases from Ngendzong Tönpa's colophon, the meaning of which was clearer in the original context. The colophon of chapter seventeen includes this passage:[89]

This outpouring of a transcendent experience,
Should not be set down in words.
However, I was afraid that I would forget it,
And in order to inspire and delight
Future holders of the lineage,
I have written it down, in accordance with the lama's words.[90]

I made the request [to do this] three times,
And he did not gladly give his permission.[91]
He said, 'I have vowed not to anger the ḍākinīs,
Therefore, I have not been careless; I have not torn the cotton.[92]
As for meditators who come henceforward in the future,
They should not show the words of this text to those

Who do not have the true experience of the oral practice-instructions.'
The guru lord sealed this [text] with his command.
If you transgress that command,
You will be punished by the ḍākinīs.
Therefore, I ask you to keep this concealed and not promulgate it.[93]

Tsangnyön Heruka repeated this text by Ngendzong as the twenty-eighth chapter of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.

The 'twelve great sons' must be the four heart-sons and eight close-sons that are listed in the final colophon of *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje:*[94]

> The four hearts sons were Rechung, Seben Repa, Ngendzong Repa and Drigom Repa. The eight close sons were Repa Shiwa Ö, Repa Sanggye Kyab, Repa Dorje Wangchuk, Shengom Repa, Rongchung Repa, Kharchung Repa, Nyengom Repa[95] and Khyira Repa.

Rechungpa is given first place in the list of heart sons, while Ngendzong is singled out, as quoted earlier, as one whose words this text purports to record. Gampopa, as Dakpo Lharje, is relegated to a list of six pupils from the end of Milarepa's life, literally 'six pupils of his passing away' *(sku gshegs pa'i slob-ma drug)*.

Thus, the text is a compilation made from texts and oral tradition, which has been attributed to Milarepa's principal *repa* pupils. It was redacted by a member of the Demchok Nyengyu transmission, perhaps within the context of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage, as there are several chapters dedicated to Gampopa. It was for the exclusive use of dedicated practitioners of that lineage. It was intended that this text be kept secret from

I pray for the patience of the gurus and ḍākinīs.
Apart from those individuals in later generations
Who are bases (for the teaching) that joyfully practise
Empowerment, blessing and *gaṇacakra*,
And make offerings to the ḍākas and ḍākiṇīs,
This [text] has been sealed by the Lord guru's command.
If one transgresses that command,
The ḍākiṇīs will be extremely angry,
Therefore, I ask you not to promulgate these writings, but keep them
secret.

anyone else. This is made clear by the final colophon, which employs words and phrases from Ngendzong's colophon:[96]

This admonition would certainly have contributed to the text remaining for a considerable time in rare hand-written manuscripts, even after the publication of Tsangnyön Heruka's works. Thus it has remained one of the rarest of Tibetan texts, even though one would expect it to be amongst the most popular, as I am sure it will be when it is eventually translated into English. Ironically, it was the primary source for Tsangnyön's *The Songs of Milarepa,* which repeated much of the text almost verbatim and was carved as blockprints to ensure a widespread distribution. Therefore, the 'secret' contents of *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* have now become one of the most widely available literary works of Tibet, and have been translated into western and other oriental languages.

The date of **The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje**

The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje possesses elements that are the result of a narrative evolution that has taken place over a few generations of transmission at least.

The text served as a source for Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507), who refers to it as *The Songs of Venerable Mila (rJe-btsun Mi-la'i 'Gur-'bum [sic])* in his *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra*.[97] Extracts were also derived from it by the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje *(Mi-bskyod rDo-rje)* (1507–54) for his *An Ocean of Kagyu Songs (bKa'-brgyud mGur-mtsho)*.[98] Thus, it is evidently earlier than the late fifteenth century

The text is a source for *A River of Blessings,* which appears to date from the later half of the fifteenth century at the latest. *A River of Blessings* is based upon a particular edition, entitled 'A Dark Treasury' *(mDzod Nag-ma),* made by the principal scribe of the fourth Shamarpa (1453–1524). This edition became available as this book was going to press. In it a lama by the name of Mipham Gönpo *(Mi-pham mGon-po)* is quoted as attributing the authorship to the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, though without any apparent justification.[99]

The text must be later than *The Dialogue at Khari (mKha'-ri zhus-lan),* the earliest *terma* to identify Milarepa as an emanation of Mañjuśrīmitra, an important Indian antecedent for the Nyingma Dzogchen lineage, and thus belongs to a period of Nyingma and Kagyu syncretism. Unfortunately I have not been able to ascertain the date of this terma, though the prophecy reappears in termas from the seventeenth century, as described in Chapter 3. *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* appears to be of a later stratum of narrative development than that found in Gyadangpa, which suggests that it is more likely to be from the fourteenth rather than the thirteenth century.

The [Old] Red Annals (Deb-ther dMar-po)

Author: 'Lord of Men' Kunga Dorje (Mi'i bDag-po Kun-dga'rDo-rje). Date: completed in 1346.[100]

This is one of the earliest of the general histories of Buddhism in Tibet *(Chos-'byung)*. It is sometimes called the *Old Red Annals* to distinguish it from a later work with the same name, which is not relevant to this book. Kunga Dorje, the head of the Tsalpa Kagyu founded by Lama Shang, completed it in the beginning of 1346.[101] The Tsalpa school was so powerful in the thirteenth century that it was one of the principal representatives for the Tibetan territory in presenting formal surrender to the empire of Genghis Khan, which was the beginning of Mongolian or Chinese hegemony over the Tibetan plateau. The school lost secular power to first the Sakya *(Sa-skya)* and then the Padru Kagyu *(Phag-gru bKa'-brgyud)* schools, which caused Kunga Dorje (Kun-dga′ rDo-*rje*) (1309–64), to become a monk and dedicate himself to writing. It is of marginal importance to this book, however, as it does not emphasise Rechungpa and ignores the lineages that derived from him, for the Rechung Nyengyu was of no importance in the context of the Tsalpa Kagyu.

Kunga Dorje's contemporary, Butön Rinchen Drup *(Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub)* (1290–1364) compiled an early Buddhist canon and also wrote a history of Buddhism in Tibet[102] that served as a source for *The Red Annals*. However, Buton's text has no relevance to the subject of Rechungpa's life. Another of Kunga Dorje's sources was The Nelpa History of Buddhism *(Nel-pa'i Chos-'byung)*[103] by Nelpa Paṇḍita *(Nel-pa Paṇḍit)*, also known as Drakpa Mönlam Tsultrim *(Grags-pa sMon-lam Tshul-khrims)*. This text also, although of historical importance, does not deal with the lives that are the topic of this book.

Shamarpa, Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*

Full title: *Clouds of Blessings: The Life of the Dharma Lord Glorious Mila Rechen (Chos-rje dPal-ldan Mi-la Ras-chen gyi rNam-par-thar-pa Byin-brlabs gyi sPrin-phung)*. Author: Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo *(Zhwa-dmar-pa mKha'-spyod dBang-po)* (1350–1405).

Clouds of Blessings is an account of the life of Milarepa by the second Shamarpa, Khachö Wangpo *(mKha'-spyod dBang-po)* (1350–1405). *A River of Blessings,* which appears to be based on Domoripa or a similar text, contains passages that correspond with *Clouds of Blessings,* and a close examination establishes that *Clouds of Blessings* is an earlier text. The Tsangnyön Heruka version followed the *Clouds of Blessings* narrative closely, while greatly expanding it. Perhaps the primary source for Tsangnyön was *A Dark Treasury*. It has been announced that *A Dark Treasury* is being published in Chengdu, China, so this mystery may soon be solved, unless it proves to be another edition of *A River of Blessings,* which has already been published under that title. However, the Shamarpa was clearly basing himself upon passages that are found in Donmo Ripa, whether doing so directly from that text or *The Dark Treasury* as an intermediary.

The second Shamarpa had succeeded to the position of hierarch of the Karma Kagyu school following the death of the fourth Karmapa, Rolpay Dorje *(Rol-pa'i rDo-rje)* (1340–83), who had recognised Khachö Wangpo as the rebirth of the first Shamarpa, Drakpa Seng-ge (*Grags-pa Seng-ge,* 1283–1349).

The Karma Kagyu tradition, which continues to be one of the principal schools of Tibetan Buddhism, was founded by a pupil of Gampopa and Rechungpa, known as

Dusum Khyenpa *(Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa)* or toponymically as Tsurpupa (*Tshur-pu-pa,* 1110–93),[104] after the site of his principal monastery. Dusum Khyenpa met Gampopa and Gomtshul in 1139[105] and received teachings from Rechungpa. He was said to be the Karmapa, a bodhisattva destined to be the next Buddha after Maitreya. In 1159, six years after Gampopa's death, he returned to his homeland in east Tibet, where he had a vision of the Indian Mahāmudrā master Saraha giving him a black hat, which was to become the principal insignia of the Karmapas. In his late seventies he established the foundation of a nationwide school by founding Karma monastery in the east in 1185 and Tshurphu in central Tibet in 1189. He became the first of a series of reincarnations known as 'Black hat Karmapas' *(Zhwa-nag Karma-pa),* following the recognition and enthronement of the second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (1204–83), who was taught the Rechung Kagyu's Jinasāgara form of Avalokiteśvara by his teacher Pomdrakpa *(sPom-grags-pa),* who had become the holder of the Karma Kagyu transmission, but had also studied with a pupil of Rechungpa. Jinasāgara became the traditional deity of the Karmapas, and ranks in importance within the Karma Kagyu only after Cakrasamvara and Vajravārāhī.

The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje *(Rang-byung rDo-rje)* (1284–1339) was an important and syncretic figure in the consolidation of the identity of the Karma Kagyu lineage. His teacher was Ogyenpa Rinchen Pal *(O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dPal)* (1229–1309), the holder of a number of transmissions. In addition to transmitting the Karma Kagyu teachings of the previous Karmapa to Rangjung Dorje, he also taught him Rechungpa's 'nine blendings and transferences', and *The Six Teachings on Equal Taste (Ro-snyoms sKor-drug)* attributed to Rechungpa.[106] Karmapa Rangjung Dorje was an important author and systematiser. He has also been credited, with authorship of The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje under the title *A Dark Treasury (mDzod Nag-ma),* a lost work on Milarepa. He performed the enthronement ceremony for Toghan Temur (reigned 1333–70), the last Mongol to rule over China. After his death in Beijing and the recognition of the fourth Karmapa, succession by rebirth was firmly established, and eventually became a widespread institution in Tibet.

The fourth Karmapa, Rolpay Dorje *(Rol-pa'i rDo-rje)* recognised the 7 year-old Khachö Wangpo *(mKha'-spyod dBang-po)* (1350–1405) as the rebirth of the first Shamarpa *(Zhwa-dmar-pa)* (1283–1349), who had been a pupil of the third Karmapa. The title means Red Hat and the lamas had the titles of Shanak (Black Hat) Karmapa and Shamar (Red Hat) Karmapa, though in practice, the Shanak Karmapas are called Karmapas and the Shamar Karmapas are challed Shamarpas. Khachö Wangpo also identified the child who would become the fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa *(bDe-bzhin gShegs-pa)* (1384–1415).

The Karma Kagyu gave rise to a branch lineage known as the Surmang Kagyu founded by Trungmasé *('Khrung-rma-se),* a.k.a Masé Tokden Lodrö Rinchen *(rMa-se rTogs-ldan Blo-gros Rin-chen),* which was based upon a transmission of Rechungpa's Karṇatantra *(sNyan-rgyud)* that had been taught to him by the fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa (*bDe-bzhin gShegs-pa,* 1384–1415). This lineage was known as 'the union of all rivers' *(chu-bo kun-'dus)* because it included the *karṇatantra* lineages of Rechungpa, Ngendzong and Gampopa.[107] Chögyam Trungpa *(Chos-rgyam*[108] *Drung-pa)* the eleventh Trungpa Tulku (1939–86), believed that this lineage had been, on the command of Nāropa, kept as a single-transmission lineage *(gcig-brgyud)* for thirteen generations, with the fifth Karmapa as the thirteenth.[109] In this form, called *The Three Jewels of the*

Samvara-ḍāka-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro'i sNyan-brgyud Nor-bu sKor-gsum),[110] or, in brief, the Khandro Nyengyu *(mKha'-' gro sNyan-brgyud),* it was maintained by the successive incarnations of Trungmasé's principal pupil: the Trungpa Tulkus *(Drung-pa sPrul-sku)*. As the principal monasteries of this lineage are the Surmang *(Zur-mang)* of Nangchen in east Tibet, the transmission is also known as the Surmang Nyengyu *(Zur-mang sNyan-brgyud),* with Nyengyu meaning 'oral transmission'. The tenth Trungpa Tulku, though a well-known author and teacher in the west, did not propagate this lineage as he had fled Tibet at the age of 20 without the necessary texts, but the Surmang group of monasteries with its two principal monasteries in the Nangchen area still continue the transmission of the *karṇatantra* teachings.[111] The present Surmang Garwang has received all the transmissions and is presently publishing the three volumes of its teachings.[112] This lineage preserved a biography of Ngendzong Tönpa *(Ngan-rdzong sTon-pa),* the pupil of Milarepa who is the source of the Demchog Nyengyu.

The Karma Kagyu became a widespread and powerful school, particularly from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century. This period saw three great works of history written by Karma Kagyu authors: *The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sNgon-po)* (completed 1478), *The Lhorong Dharma History [of the Kagyu Lineages] (lHo-rong Chos-'byung)* (1451) and the second Pawo, Tsukla Trengwa's (*dPa'-bo, gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba,* 1504–66) *A Feast for Scholars (mKhas-pa'i dGa'-ston)*.

The manuscript of the Shamarpa's text, as reproduced in the first of four volumes of the collected works of Khachö Wangpo,[113] is incomplete, as seven of its forty-six folios are missing, although a complete version has been obtained by the TBRC.

Paljor Zangpo: *The Great Chronicle of China and Tibet (rGya-bod Yig-tshang Chen-mo)*

Author: Taktsang Dzongpa Paljor Zangpo (sTag-tshang rDzong-pa dPal-'byor bZang-po). Date: written in 1434.

This is not simply a 'Dharma History' *(Chos-'byung),* for it contains records of cultural and political interest, such as the introduction of tea and porcelain into Tibet and a history of the kings of Gyantse *(rGyal-rtse)*. Paljor Zangpo's title of Taktsang Dzongpa indicates that he was a lay official, and though there is no information concerning Paljor Zangpo, Dungkar Lobsang Trinlay (*Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'Phrin-las,* 1927–97) ascertained the time of composition from internal evidence.[114] The text contains a brief but significant reference to Rechungpa.[115]

The Lhorong Dharma History (Lho-rong Chos-'byung)

Author: Tatsak Tsewang Gyal (rTa-tshag Tshe-dbang rGyal). Date: begun in 1446 and completed in 1451.

The Lhorong Dharma History is an informal name for this text, simply because it was written in Lhorong county of east Tibet. It is also known as Tatsak's Dharma History *(rTa-tshag Chos-'byung),* after the monastery of the author: Tatsak Tsewang Namgyal (or

Tsewang Namgyal of Tatsak monastery). The title in the colophon is *The Dharma History that Illuminates [Śākya]muni's Teaching (Chos 'byung thub bstan gsal byed)*. This text was republished in China in 1994 from one surviving manuscript. It is a particularly important Dharma-history *(chos- 'byung)* as it concentrates entirely on the various branches of the Kagyupa traditions and includes short biographies of Rechungpa[116] and his lineage holders.[117]

Tsewang Gyal used the second Shamarpa's text (or an identical text) as a source for there is a passage at the beginning of Rechungpa's biography that is identical to one in *Clouds of Blessings*.[118]

In the colophon, Tsewang Gyal states that he collected whatever histories he could find over many years.[119] As his principal source, he relied upon Chen-nga's *(sPyan-snga) The Dharma History that is a Thousand Lights that Open the Eyes (Chos'byung Mig-'byed 'od-stong)*. Tsewang Gyal spent far longer on revision than on the completion of the first draft.

> In the fire-tiger year (1446) I compiled all the histories of the precious Kagyu that I could find and [this] faithful supplication by others and myself was completed in the first month of the Rabjung (rab-byung) year (1447)… Revision and correction of this [text], *The Dharma History that Illuminates [Śākya]muni's Teaching,* was completed in the third day of the waning moon in the fifth month of the sheep year (1451).[120]

Möntsepa: *The Golden Garland of the Kagyu (bKa'-brgyud gSer- 'phreng)*

Author: Möntse Kunga Palden *(Mon-rtse Kun-dga' dPal-ldan)* (1408–75), a.k.a Möntsepa *(Mon-rtse-pa)*. Date: circa 1450–75.

From the 'eastern' or 'upper' *(sTod)* lineage of the Drukpa Kagyu, which was founded by Götsangpa Gönpo Dorje (*rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rDo-rje,* 1189–1258) there branched the Bara Kagyu *('Ba'-ra bKa'-brgyud),* founded by Barawa (*'Ba'-ra-ba,* 1310–91). Möntsepa Kunga Pal (*Mon-rtse-pa Kun-dga'-dpal,* circa 1408–75) was a member of this lineage.

Möntsepa includes a biography of Rechungpa, entitled *The Life of the Venerable Rechung Dorje Drak (rJe-btsun Ras-chung rDo-rje Grags kyi rnam-par-thar-pa)* in his history of the Bara Kagyu *('Ba'-ra bKa'-brgyud)*.[121] Möntsepa was a member of this branch of the Drukpa Kagyu. He includes a biography of Rechungpa between those of Milarepa and Gampopa. He appears to rely upon Gyadangpa or his source, repeating its structural division of the life-story into two parts (1) Hardship in connection with the family and (2) Experience connected to meditation.

Kunga Paljor: A History of the [Drukpa] Kagyu (dKar-brgyud Chos-′byung)

Author: Drukchen Kunga Paljor (*'Brug-chen Kun-dga' dPal-'byor,* 1428–76). Date: composed circa 1460–76.

Kunga Paljor was the hereditary hierarch of the Drukpa Kagyu who declared himself to be the rebirth of Tsangpa Gyaré (*gTsang-pa rGya-ras,* 1161–1211), the founder of the Drukpa Kagyu *('Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud).* This led to succession by incarnation, in which Kunga Paljor is counted as the second Drukchen *('Brug-chen),* with Tsangpa Gyaré as the first. This fourteen-folio text, from his two volumes of collected works,[122] is an account of Kagyu lineages with an emphasis on his own tradition. It includes a brief account of Rechungpa's life.

The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sngon-po)

Author: Gö Shönnu Pal (*'Gos gZhon-nu dPa*l, 1392–1481). Date: completed in 1478.

This extensive Dharma History *(chos-'byung)* covers all lineages in Tibet. The author's relative lack of partisanship, though he ignores much of the Nyingma terma tradition, conforms to a degree of historical critical method in dealing with his sources, rather than attempting to create a primarily inspirational work. Gö Lotsawa *('Gos Lo-tsā-ba)* is particularly concerned with calculating the correct dates for the lives of his subjects, even though the unwieldiness of Tibet's system of dating by sixty-year cycles does result in instances of error. He based himself on a great number of sources, but does not cite them or state which versions he either rejects or adopts. The text includes an account of Rechungpa's life[123] and lineages.[124] Khetsun Sangpo's multi-volume *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism* merely repeats *The Blue Annals* in its section on Milarepa and Rechungpa.[125]

A River of Blessing *(Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun)*

Full title: *A River of Blessings that Dispels the Tormenting Heat of the Defilements (Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun gyis Nyon-mongs pa'i Tsha-gdung Sel-bar-byed-pa).* Subtitle: *A Collection of the Vajra Songs of the Lord of Yogins, Lord Mila Shepay Dorje, adorned by his history. (rJe rnal- 'byor gyi dbang-phyug mi-la bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje'i 'gur-tshogs lo-rgyus kyis spms-pa).*[126] Author: anonymous. Date: late fifteenth century onwards.

This text is an extensive compilation of the life and songs of Milarepa. It shows no influence whatsoever from the works of Tsangnyön Heruka and vice-versa. They may have been roughly contemporary.

One example of this text is the publication of a hand-written manuscript that runs to 539 folios. However, the scribe, in his addendum,[127] refers to this text as *A Dark Treasury (mDzod-nag-ma)* and the title of this edition, clearly based on that in the colophon, is *A Dark Treasury of the Songs of the Lord of Yogins, Mila Shepay Dorje, compiled by*

Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (rNal-'byor gyi dbang-phyug mi-la bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje'i' gur mdzod nag-ma zhes-pa karma-pa Rang-byung rDo-rjes phyogs gcig tu bkod-pa).

A Dark Treasury (mDzod-nag-ma) is in fact a generic title for texts that should not be made available to the public. It refers to that part of the home where precious things not put in display are kept. This room, or closet, has no windows and therefore is in darkness.[128] That this is a generic title may be the cause for the problem concerning the identity of this text or texts. The published edition's title and its identification of Rangjung Dorje as the author is puzzling, for the actual colophon states that it was based primarily upon three works, one of which is *A Dark Treasury (mDzod-nag-ma)* by Rangjung Dorje *(Rang-byung rDo-rje),* the third Karmapa (1284–1339). Perhaps the scribe of the existing manuscript of *A River of Blessings* misunderstood the syntactically clumsy and ambiguous colophon, which is open to interpretation.[129] The use of *zhes dang* does seem to conclusively divide this passage into a description of three different texts. The first part is based upon the colophon of 'A Dark Treasury', which reads: Dharma Lord Mipham Gönpo said that it is known that there are endless song compilations of the venerable one, and he had read about a hundred compilations, amongst which this had the most [songs], and as it was written by Lord Karmapa Rangjung Dorje himself and therefore is a genuine source and should be greatly chen's had. One version of what the clumsy colophon may mean, follows:

> Concerning this compilation of the vajra songs and biography of the great venerable Milarepa:
>
> The Dharma Lord Karmapa said that most [songs] were contained in the compilation of the great venerable one's songs entitled 'A hundred and eight [songs] to read'.[130] Then the Dharma Lord Rangjung Dorje himself wrote them out—with great care and using genuine sources—as *A Dark Treasury*.
>
> There is also [the text] that is said to be an aggregation of seventeen different song collections that was excellently made in the great Pal Gungthang temple.
>
> There is also [the text] that is said to be a compilation from reading a hundred and twenty-seven different biographies of the venerable one.
>
> [I] also supplemented these with whatever other song collections of the venerable one that [I] could find.
>
> rje btsun chen po mi la ras pa′i rnam thar rdo rje'i glu dang ′gur 'di rnams phyogs cig tu bsdus pa ′di/Chos kyi rje karma pa'i zhal nas rje btsun chen po′i gsung ′gur phyogs cig tu sgrigs pa brgya tsa brgyad gzigs pa′i nang nas kyang mang sho[s] su ′du[g]′ ′gsung nas/chos rje rang byung rdo rje nyid kyis phyag bris mdzad pa khung btsun shing thugs rtsis shin tu (4) che ba′i mdzod nag ma zhes pa dang/

There is another, but apparently incomplete manuscript edition of this text in the TBRC, which only goes as far as page 318 in the copy I received, and therefore unfortunately lacks the colophon. However, its title does *not* identify it as *The Dark Treasury*. Its title page is evidently derived from the colophon as evidenced from the complete manuscript as it reads *The Collected Songs of the Lord, the Lord of Yogins, Glorious Shepay Dorje,*

adorned by his history (rJe rNal-byor[131] *dBang-phyug dPal bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i*[132] *'Gur 'tshogs tshad phyogs gcig*[133] *tu bsgrig-pa lo-rgyus kyis spras-pa).*

Also, the TBRC text opens with a verse from the beginning of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* which it is based on. There are a series of portraits of lamas and deities on the pages, in an archaic style, but unfortunately with atrocious spelling of their names. The latest teacher that I have been able to identify is Zurpukpa *(Zur-phug-pa),* who was a teacher of Barawa (*'Ba'-ra-ba,* 1310–91), so that the manuscript dates from the fourteenth century at the earliest, but the text itself, cannot be earlier than the fifteenth as shown below.

The identity of *A Dark Treasury* is made more puzzling by the following sentence from *The History of Drakar Taso,* which was written in the early nineteenth century:

> The one named Shiché Ripa *(Zhi-byed Ri-pa)* who is famous for having read a hundred and twenty-seven different biographies of the venerable one, composed *A Dark Treasury,* and a blockprint of this previously existed amongst the retreat centres of Chuwar *(Chu-dbar)* as is described in the biography of Gamnyön Chardor Norbu *(sGam-smyon Phyag-rdor Nor-bu).*134

The identity of Gamnyön is yet another mystery. The full form of his name is presumably Ghana Dorje Norbu *(Phyag-na rDo-rje Nor-bu).* This is presumably referring to the Shiché Ripa text that Deshung Rinpoche saw at the Drakar Taso library. As will be seen below, Kathok Tsewang Norbu in the eighteenth century also refers to a biography of Milarepa by Zhiché Repa, and says he was famous for having read a 127 biographies, but he does not name the title of the text. However, as 'a dark treasury' is a generic rather than a specific title, referring to a text that is not to be widely distributed, the title could apply to Shiché Ripa's text as well as to the one attributed to the third Karmapa, and also to *A River of Blessings* itself. Their limited distribution and their being referred to by the same name could be the cause for the present confusion.

The scribe of this edition published in India states that he wrote this text in Pema Kö *(Pad-ma bKod),* a lush border area that he describes with delicate imagery. He refers to himself as 'the old mendicant' who failed to start his work for some time as he lacked the resources. He lists various donors that supplied him with food and paper to write on. He commenced the work in a water-tiger year and completed it in the following year, a water-hare year. He prays that a master named Pema Tendzin *(Pad-ma bsTan- 'dzin)* have a long life.[135] Although the name is not uncommon, an examination of the religious history of Pema Kö, which begins in the seventeenth century with Dundul Dorje *(bDud-'dul rDo-rje)* (1615–72),[136] may be able to fix the time of the writing out of this manuscript. Possible dates for this particular manuscript are 1722–3, 1782–3, 1842–3 and 1902–3, with the latter two dates being more likely.

Much of *A River of Blessings* is comprised of verbatim extracts from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. The absence of a specific title in the colophon's citation of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* agrees with the absence of a title in the Oxford manuscript, different titles for the Newark and Stockholm versions, and Tsangnyön Heruka's reference to it as *The Hundred thousand Songs of Venerable Mila (rJe-btsun Mi-la'i 'Gur-'bum).*[137]

A River of Blessings' sources were obscure enough ar the time of its compilation, for the information about them to be qualified by the non-honorific verb *zer,* which carries the meaning of, 'it is said…' Signifying a certain degree of uncertainty.[138]

The Sources for A River of Blessings

A River of Blessings states that it relied on two other sources apart from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* by the title 'Dark Treasury' and two other sources.

As this text repeats material from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* practically verbatim, the use of that source is evident. There are also sections of the text that correspond with *Clouds of Blessings,* the second Shamarpa's life of Milarepa. As the second Shamarpa, Khachö Wangchuk *(mKha'-spyod dBang-phyug)* (1350–1405) was the successor of the fourth Karmapa, he would have used the third Karmapa as a source, if he was indeed the author of the Shepay Dorje text. However, there seems to be no direct reliance upon the Shepay Dorije text, which under the title Dark Treasury was atributed to the third Karmapa.

A *River of Blessings* clearly has a third component in the content of its narrative. These idiosyncratic and delightful passages are written in a colloquial manner, quite distinct from the usual literary style of the third Karmapa, and they contain amusing and fascinating alternative versions of incidents in the life of Milarepa. It appears to have been born out of a tradition of humorous story-telling. These must have been derived from the untitled life-story described in the colophon as a compilation of a 127 biographies. The eighteenth-century Katok Tsewang Norbu *(Kah-thog Tshe-dbang Nor-bu)* refers to just such a text as a source for his chronology. He states that it was composed by Shiché Ripa *(Zhi-byed Ri-pa),* who was renowned for his having read a 127 biographies of Milarepa, here written in the eastern form of 'Myi-la' *(zhi byed ri pa bya ba myi la' i rnam thar brgya dang nyer bdun gzigs par grags pas…).*[139] This appears to be what Lhalungpa refers to as:

> among the comparatively little known versions is one compiled by Shijay Repa, a contemporary of the great Bodong Panchen *[Bo-dong Paṇ-chen*] (1377–1451). The life of Situ Chokyi Junnay [Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas (1700–1774)] refers to this version as 'the manuscript preserved at the monastery of Chuwar *[Chu-dbar]* in Drin *[Brin]*.[140]

Ripa *(Ri-pa)* was incorrectly written as Repa *(ras-pa)* in Lhalungpa. The reference to Chuwar matches *A History of Drakar Taso's* description of Shiché Ripa's text, which it calls *A Dark Treasury,* being in Chuwar.

The Bodong Panchen referred to by Lhalungpa is the founder of the Bodongpa *(Bo-dong-pa)* school. According to the biography written in 1453 by Bodongpa's own pupil, Jigme Wangpo *('Jigs-med dBang-po),* Bodong Panchen's dates are 1376–1451 (fire-dragon to iron-sheep).[141] These are also the dates given by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center data base.[142] As he was not born in the last months of the fire-dragon year, Lhalungpa's date of 1377 appears to be inaccurate. Jigme Wangpo noted that there was a discrepancy concerning Bodongpa's dates because his father, to protect him from sorcery, had kept his real birth year secret and therefore most people believed he was

born in 1375 (wood-hare). However, Bodongpa privately supplied his real birth dates for those who were to perform ceremonies for his benefit.[143] The incorrect public date is still found recorded in the *Tshig-mDzod Chen-mo* dictionary.[144] Ehrhard gives the dates of 1375–1473, without indicating his source, extending his life by twenty-two years in what must be an error.[145]

King Namgyal De *(rNam-gyal lDe)* (1422–1502; reigned 1436–1502), the ruler of Mangyul Gungtang *(Mang-yul Gung-thang)* had been a patron of both Bodongpa and Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507), spanning two generations of teachers in his long reign.[146] Therefore, if Shiché Ripa was a contemporary of Bodongpa, his lost work may have been written only a few decades before Tsangnyön Heruka's famous work, but it had no influence on Tsangnyön's version.

Date and Authorship of A River of Blessings

The colophon contains a prayer for the future of the Drubgyu *(sGrub-brgyud),* which means 'practice lineage', an alternative name for the Kagyu. The colophon's reverence for the Karmapa identifies the anonymous compiler as being connected with the Karma Kagyu. The author first refers to the Karmapa without specifying which Karmapa he is. Subsequently, he identifies him, in passing, as Rangjung Dorje, who was the third Karmapa (1284–1339). This implies that the author assumed the authorship of *A Dark Treasury* was known to his potential readership and the colophon is a crude rewrite from that text's colophon. However, if Shiché Ripa's text dates to the fifteenth century, the compilation would have to be of a later date. Moreover, a detailed comparison of passages reveals that the second Shamarpa (1350–1405) based himself upon the Donmo Ripa text, making a few transpositions, additions and substitutions. *A River of Blessings* retains these alterations. They could not have been identical by coincidence. *It also* makes further alterations to *Clouds of Blessings,* such as dropping an adjective and so on, further distancing itself from Donmo Ripa. This would again appear to establish that the text could not be earlier than the fifteenth century. However, it could be argued that the Shamarpa was reproducing passages from some source verbatim, and that *A River of Blessings* was based solely upon that text.

A River of Blessings does not appear to have been influenced in the least by Tsangnyön Heruka or his pupils' works, and vice-versa, which argues for their being roughly contemporary, but that is not necessarily so, as, for example, though Shiché Ripa's works appear to predate Tsangnyön Heruka and his followers, even Götsang Repa does not appear to have had access to it. Tsangnyön Heruka's works became widely available through printing, while *A River of Blessings* remained in manuscript, and so it would be more likely that A *River of Blessings* predates Tsangnyön's, for it seems unlikely that the compiler of *A River of Blessings* would have ignored Tsangnyön Heruka's work, as he had a predilection for compiling variants of the same incident. Therefore, A *River of Blessings* may have been written in the second half of the fifteenth century by a contemporary of Tsangnyön Heruka. None of this is certain, but hopefully this mystery will be soon solved with the ongoing re-appearance of ancient Tibetan texts.

A Commentary and Outline for the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud kyi gZhung-'brel sa-bcad dang sBrags-pa) by Tsangnyön Heruka *(gTsang-smyon He-ru-ka)*

Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507), the author of *The Life of Milarepa (Mi-lai'i rNam-thar),* compiled the instructions from the lineage of Rechungpa into a text known as the *Demchok Khandro Nyengyu (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud)* or *Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*. The largest work within this compilation is *A Commentary and Outline for the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud kyi gZhung-'brel sa-bcad dang sBrags-pa)*. It includes a history of the lineage transmitted through Rechungpa's pupil Khyungtsangpa (*Khyung-tshang-pa,* 1115–76) and eventually to Tsangnyön's own master Shara Rabjampa Sang-gyé Seng-ge *(Sha-ra Rab-'byams-pa Sangs-rgyas Seng-ge)*. It also includes a list of other lineages from Rechungpa, which Tsangnyön had also received. The brief biographies are not divided into distinct works, and Rechungpa's biography is only two folios long.[147] It is of importance in the investigation of narrative development however, for it is an instance of two differing versions produced by the same author.

Tsangnyön Heruka created a smooth narrative flow in *The Life of Milarepa (Mi-la'i rNam-thar)* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa (Mi-la'i mGur 'bum),* in spite of their being syncretic. His *Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra* biographies[148] are comparatively restrained and dry. According to the biography of Tsangnyön Heruka by Götsang Repa, he began writing the *Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra* texts before his well-known Milrepa texts, which were completed in 1488, while the bulk was written from 1490 until near his death in 1207.[149] My analysis of the text indicates that the *Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra* version of the life of Rechungpa are earlier than the corresponding passages in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. The opposite at first appears to be indicated when Tsangnyön Heruka writes, 'A detailed life of Rechungpa is to be found in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Lord Mila*.' *(Ras chung pa'i rnam thar rgyas pa ni rje btsun mi la'i 'gur 'bum na gsal lo),*[150] but Tsangnyön Heruka was not referring to his own work. Apart from the eight chapters of the *The Hundred Thousand Songs* in which Rechungpa's dialogues and song exchanges with Milarepa feature, it contains nothing about Rechungpa's individual career apart from Milarepa, which is narrated in detail in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje 'i rNam-tha mgur-chings dang bcas-pa),* which had no fixed title and was the primary source for his own *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. 'A Hundred Thousand Songs' *(mGur-'bum)* is merely a generic title for the collected songs of any Buddhist master. In Tsangnyön's version, at the point when the narrative turns from Milarepa to describe Rechungpa's time with his wife Lhachik *(lHa-cig)* in central Tibet, Tsangnyön Heruka provides only a brief summary and adds, 'the account of which is to be found in Rechungpa's own biography' *(lo rgyus rnams ras chung pa rang gi rnam thar na gsal lo)*.[151] This is *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po),* which Tsangnyön Heruka's own pupils, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-*

btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal) and Götsang Repa *(rGod-tshang Ras-pa)* would name as the primary source for their biographies of Rechungpa.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal: *A concise life and extensive songs of Lord Rechungpa who attained the rainbow-body in one lifetime (Tshe-gcig la 'Ja'-lus brNyes-pa rJe Ras-chung-pa'i rNam-thar Rags-bsdus mGur rNam-rgyas-pa)*

Author: Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (*Lha-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal,* 1473–1557). Date: completed in 1503.

This is the earliest surviving biography of Rechungpa written as a wholly independent work. Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal completed this biography of Rechungpa in the water-pig year of 1503, when he was thirty years old, during the lifetime of his teacher Tsangnyön Heruka. 'Lhatsun', literally 'divine venerable one' is a title for monks from a royal lineage. His father was King Namgyal De, the ruler of Gungthang who was Tsangnyön's patron. Rinchen Namgyal was therefore not short of patronage, and established Drakar Taso monastery at one of the most important sites connected with Milarepa, built temples, published texts and restored the Swayambhu stūpa in Nepal.

At Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so),* Rinchen Namgyal followed the example of his teacher Tsangnyön by writing and publishing hagiographies. In the colophon to his biography of Tsangnyön, he says he completed it in the sixth month of a water-hare year. Assuming there is no scribal error in the colophon, this must be 1543, thirty-six years after Tsangnyön's death.[152] If Smith is correct in the dates he supplies for Rinchen Namgyal, he was seventy years old when he wrote this shortened biography of his master.

In 1502, the year before completing the biography of Rechungpa, Rinchen Namgyal returned from accompanying Tsangnyön on his teacher's earlier restoration work on Swayambhu stupa in the Kathmandu valley.[153] The Rechungpa biography is 195 folios in length and the colophon reads:

> [This] slightly abbreviated form of the general biographies with a hundred and fifty-five vajra songs [are derived] from the extensive biography and song collection by Sanggyé Tönpa, Gyalwa Lo, and Dampa Sumpa. It was completed at Drakar Taso by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, his mind blended with Siddha Tsangpa, on a waxing summer month of a water male pig year (1503).[154]

The text referred to here as the principal source is *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po)*. The main body of Rinchen Namgyal's work corresponds with the contents of the biography by Götsang Repa, which was also based on this work, and therefore must represent its contents. As the earlier part of Rechungpa's

life differs in the works of both authors, it is uncertain what the early part of the *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* contained.

Smith cites the existence of two biographies of Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, which are the source for his dates, his royal ancestry, a belief that he was a rebirth of a well-known abbot, and that he built a hermitage at Drakar Taso.[155]

Some miscellaneous oral transmissions including the venerable Mi-la Ras-pa's six Vajra songs (rJe-btsun Mi-la Ras-pa'i rDo-rje'i mGur-drug sogs gSung-rgyun Thor-bu 'ga')

Author: compiled by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (*lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal,* 1473–1557). Date: 1550.

This text has been translated into English in two parts[156] and Martha Sensei is working on a forthcoming study of the text. She states that these editions of the text are available:

1 The Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so)* edition of which there is one copy in the Cambridge University Library, and another in the Is.I.A.O library in Rome.
2 A nineteenth-century edition from Labrang Tashikhyil *(Bla-brang bKra-shis 'Khyil)* monastery in Amdo.
3 A 1932 woodblock produced by Dingriwa Chökyi Gyaltsen *(Ding-ri-ba Chos-kyi rGyal-mtshan,* 1897-circa 1956)
4 A modern edition made at Tashi Lhundrup *(bKra-shis lHun-grub)* monastery.
5 A woodblock concluding with a prayer composed by Jamyang Gelek *('Jam-dbyangs dGe-legs)*.[157]

It is a compilation of songs, often with title and a brief, concluding dedication, which first existed independently as individual short texts. The first section is comprised of a compilation printed earlier by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal)*. Sensei in her study of the original edition from Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so)* discovered from its colophon that the entire text is a later compilation by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal. These songs do not appear in Rinchen Namgyal's biography of Rechungpa, which was printed in 1503. Stating that these are songs that are not found in Tsangnyön Heruka's printed version, the colophon states:

> Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal created this print at the great site of Drakar Taso on the excellent day of a waxing summer moon in the year of the male iron dog. May this virtue cause all beings, principally [my] parents, to manifest the primordially present three kāyas.

This male iron-dog year will be 1550, when Rinchen Namgyal was 77, seven years before his death at the age of 84. These songs do not appear in Rinchen Namgyal's biography of Rechungpa, which was printed in 1503, almost fifty years earlier. The six songs in Rinchen Namgyal's earlier compilation also appear in Götsang Repa's biography of Rechungpa, symptomatic of his using as many sources as possible, though

some lines and words differ and the first two songs alternate in their order. More importantly, the narrative settings are richer in Götsang Repa's version.

The earlier compilation of six songs has its own colophon, which indicates a similar approach to that of Tsangnyön Heruka in making previously secret songs and narrative widely available:

> Though there is a strict seal upon the six vajra songs
> The divinely venerable Rinchen Namgyal has,
> Purely from an intention to benefit others,
> In this later time, published them.
> I pray for the patience of the gurus and ḍākinīs.

The songs in that section, though sometimes addressed to Rechungpa are devoid of narrative. The opening salutation and introduction of the text dates to the later compilation, for Rinchen Namgyal introduces it with the hyperbolic appellation of 'the eight hundred songs of Milarepa'[159] and towards the end of the text, shortly before describing Milarepa's death, declares 'the eight hundred songs' concluded.[160]

The description of Milarepa's death and funeral is derived verbatim from Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa* beginning with Milarepa's advice on practice, following his instruction to his pupils to dig under the hearth after his death, for he had buried something there for them. To meld this section into his text, Rinchen Namgyal awkwardly transforms part of the first sentence from dialogue into a piece of narrative.

Tsangnyön Heruka:

> Concerning how you should practise, in these times, men proud of being good Dharma practitioners[161]
>
> Khyed rnams kyi nyams len byed lugs la/da lta chos pa bzang por rlom pa'i mi

Rinchen Namgyal:

> Concerning the practice of the pupils [he said], 'In these times, men proud of being good Dharma practitioners'[162]
>
> Bu slob rnams kyi nyams len la/da lta chos pa bzang por rlom pa'i mi

Rechungpa appears only incidentally within this compilation, and so it is of little significance in terms of the development of the narrative of his life.

Götsang Repa: *The Radiance of Wisdom: a mirror that clearly reveals the path to liberation and omniscience; a biography of Lord Ras-chung-pa (rJe-btsun Ras-chung-pa'i rNam-thar rNam-mkhyen Thar-lam gSal-bar-ston-pa'i Me-long Ye-shes kyi sNang-ba)*

Author: Götsangpa Natsok Raangdrol *(rGod-tshang-pa sNa-tshogs Rang-grol),* a.k.a Götsang Repa (*rGod-tshang Ras-pa,* born 1470, died before 1543). Probably written in the years preceding its first printing in 1531.

This extensive compilation of Rechungpa's life and songs is the version that is best known in Tibet and has become the standard version of his life.

The latter two-thirds of the text appear to be derived verbatim from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po),* including some first-person descriptions by Rechungpa's pupils of his death. Even the entire colophon of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* is included.[163] In his own colophon, Götsang Repa describes primarily the location where he wrote this biography:[164]

> The life story of venerable Rechung Dorje Drakpa is a compilation of the genuine, the credible and the certain from amongst many differing texts that describe the manner in which he benefited beings in this realm; the primary [source] was the *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* which is the life story composed by 'the three siddha brothers'. This [book]—*The Radiance of Wisdom: A Mirror that reveals the precious path to wisdom and liberation*—was [composed] by a yogin of the supreme yāna, Götsang Repa, a man with many names, in Omin Khachö Potrang ('The *Akaniṣṭha-khasarpana* Palace'; *'Og-min mKha'-spyod Pho-brang),* which is the highest *labrang* (*bla-brang,* lama's residence) in glorious Rechung Pukpa (*dPal Ras-chung Phug-pa,* The Rechungpa Cave). This is the famous sacred place that is a second Kuśīnagara, for it is where Vajradhara in human form—Tsangnyön Heruka—merged his *rūpakāya* into the *dharmadhātu;* it was blessed by Rechung Dorje Drak, as prophesied by Milarepa, and is upon the side of a mountain known as Lomalori *(Lo-ma Lo-ri),* which resembles a ripened rice-plant, with a peak like a heap of jewels, where the earth is the growth of a tier of five *dharmodayas* in the centre of the land of Yarmo Lungring *(Yar-mo Lungs-rings).*[165]

Götsang Repa unfortunately gives no date for this composition. It was written after the death of Tsangnyön Heruka in 1507, for his death is referred to. Rinchen Namgyal, within the biography of Tsangnyön that he completed in 1543, refers his reader to more

detailed biographies written by earlier fellow pupils: ‘If you wish to read [a description of the death of Tsangnyön] in greater detail, you will find it in the biographies composed by my great past [Dharma] brothers.’ *(rGyas par gzigs ‘dod na mched grogs gong ma rnams kyis mdzad pa’i rnam thar du dgongs ‘tshal lo)*.[166] As Rinchen Namgyal specifies more than one earlier biography, this reference must include Götsang Repa’s version, for there seems to be only one other Tsangnyön biography. Therefore Götsang Repa’s biography of Tsangnyön must pre-date 1543. Also, the term *gong ma,* in a religious context as opposed to a secular context, normally refers to great masters who are no longer living, or *nga-rabs kyi bla ma* as *The Great Tibetan Dictionary (Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo)* puts it.[167] Although Götsang Repa may only have been three years older than Rinchen Namgyal, the implication here is that Götsang Repa was no longer alive in 1543.

The Rechung Puk *(Ras-chung-phug)* edition (there is an unclear print in Bell collection of the India Office Library) has a second colophon in which Götsang Repa describes the circumstances in which that blockprint was made. Götsang Repa states that he produced a total of 755 printing blocks, beginning in the third month of a hare year.

> Götsang Repa: a man with many names and no certain location, with unwavering faith in the Buddha’s teachings and the Kagyu [lineage], in order that all who have a connection [with me], throughout all space, may attain enlightenment, and so that the essence of the practice lineage will spread and be enduring, beginning auspiciously upon the eighth day of the third month of the year of the hare, [created] representations of the Body: Vajradhara, the Venerable [Vajravārāhī], Vajragarbha, Tilopa, Nāropa and all the lineage holders of the mahāmudrā, the six dharmas and the karṇatantra, together with [images] of the gurus, yidams, ḍākinīs and dharma-protectors; and also representations of Mind created from precious substances as a religious gift; and also, so as to increase the gift of the Dharma, inexhaustible representations of the Speech: the extensive life and ‘hundred thousand songs’ of venerable Rechungpa, the *nirmāṇakāya* of Guhyapati (‘Lord of Secrets’, i.e., Vajrapāṇi); the previously printed transmission of instruction manuals, the biography-supplications for the purpose [of this printing]…and the biography of the venerable Tsangnyön that had been previously printed in Dakpo Gyal *(Dags-po rGyal)*……making a complete total of seven hundred and fifty woodblocks.[168]

Götsang Repa uses the words *bkod* for write and *bzheng* for printing, an usage that is very clear in the colophon to his biography of Tsangnyön Heruka, which he writes first in prose and then repeats in verse. He uses *yi-ger bkod* for the writing of the text, using it interchangeably on one occasion with *bris* (written);[169] while *bzhengs* is used solely for carving a woodblock for printing, and is combined with *spar*.[170]

He states that a Karmapa had twice instructed him to have these blockprints made. This Karmapa must have been the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (*Mi-bskyod rDo-rje,* 1507–54), who compiled *The Ocean of Kagyu Songs (bKa’-brgyud mGur-tsho)* in around 1542.

The hare year in the colophon must be 1531, when Götsang Repa was 61-years old and the Karmapa was 24, if Götsang Repa had passed away by the next hare year, 1543, which was also a year after the eighth Karmapa's death.

Götsang Repa had a new edition carved of the previously printed blocks of his record of oral instructions. Presumably this was his 123 folio text on the Cakrasamvara instructions, the colophon of which sadly gives no information upon the date of its composition.[171] He composed ancillary texts for that work, and a supplication to accompany his biography of Rechungpa. He states that this adds up to 432 blocks. Both sides of a folio would have been on each block for *The Life of Rechungpa* itself, in the Rechung Puk edition, numbers 248 folios.

Götsang Repa states that he had blocks made for the biography of Tsangnyön Heruka that had been previously carved *(bzheng)* at Dakpo Gyal *(Dags-po-rgyal)*. The 146 folio text (as in the present Rechung Puk edition), together with a supplication, is said to amount to a 170 blocks. In addition to those, there are another forty works, making a total of 775 woodblocks.

His Tsangnyön biography was therefore an earlier work than the Rechungpa biography. Gene Smith, in his preface to the biography of Tsangnyön, writes that 'the colophon states that the biography was written in 1547'.[172] However, the colophon of the biography reads *spre'u'i lo hor zla dang po'i yar tshes bcwo lnga la grub par sbyar ba'o:* 'I completed this on the fifteenth day of the lunar month of the monkey year.'[173] This could not be 1547 as that was mostly a sheep year with its first few months being in the horse year, and it seems that Götsang Repa was already dead by that year. Instead, the date of Götsang Repa's biography of Tsangnyön could be 1512, 1524 or 1536, as no element is specified, and as it must be after Tsangnyön's death and before 1543.

The final page of the Rechung Puk edition contains a drawing of Götsang Repa, who is portrayed wearing bone adornments and earrings, his hair in a topknot, seated on a deerskin, and having the attributes of a bow and set of arrows.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, in his biography of Tsangnyön, lists Götsang Repa, along with himself, as being amongst Tsangnyön's thirty-five principal pupils, who are all described as 'realised' *(rtogs-ldan)*. This term is also used as an euphemism for a non-monastic master of tantric practice, although Rinchen Namgyal himself was a monk.

Götsang Repa wrote a short autobiography in verse. E.Gene Smith has an incomplete transcription (the first two folios) amongst his personal notes.[174] This portion, unfortunately, goes only as far as his twelfth year. He describes receiving a number of teachings during that year, including the corpus of Tsalpa Kagyu *(Tshal-pa bKa'-brgyud)* and Shangpa Kagyu *(Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud)* teachings, from his paternal uncle. He states that during that time, in his eighth year:

> A tea-merchant that had been to Lhasa said, 'There was a yogin, who wore a human skin, named Tsangnyön,' and as soon as I heard that my body-hair stood up and tears came to my eyes.[175]

Unfortunately, he is as vague in giving the year of his birth as he is in dating the composition of his texts, merely stating that he was born in a tiger year.[176] Tsangnyön was in his early twenties when he first wore human skin and became known as Tsangnyön. According to Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, Tsangnyön was in Lhasa, wearing

such a costume during his twenty-fourth year, in other words when he was 23. In Tibet, one's age advances with the beginning of a new year rather than a birthday, therefore his visit to Lhasa could have been 1474 or 1475. Shortly after this visit to Lhasa, he left his human skin robe (and also his skull bowl that still had the scalp attached) with his mother; who had told him that if he continued to dress like that, people would think he was a demon and hide from him. Therefore, in less alarming attire, Tsangnyön set off on a journey that would take him to Nepal for the first time.[177]

An eighth year, inclusive, from the tiger year of 1470 would yield the year 1476 or 1477, which is one to three years later than the date given by Rinchen Namgyal for Tsangnyön's bizarre visit to Lhasa. However, Rinchen Namgyal describes *The Life of Milarepa* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs* as being written when Tsangnyön (1452–1507) was in the year following his thirty-eighth year,[178] which would be 1489 or 1490, whereas Tsangnyön specifically dates the text to 1488 (the year of *phur-bu,* from the Sanskrit *Kilaka,* which is the equivalent of the male earth monkey). Therefore, either Rinchen Namgyal or Tsangnyön is making an error of one or two years, and it is more likely to be Rinchen Namgyal.

Possibly, Götsang Repa may also have erred by a year, and also the tea-merchant's news could have been old by the time he reached Götsang Repa's home village, but it does seem that both Götsang Repa and Rinchen Namgyal are referring to the same visit to Lhasa. This would mean that the tiger year that Götsang Repa was born in was 1470, whatever year the visit took place, though this now seems more likely to have been 1477 than Rinchen Namgyal's 1474 or 1475. Götsang Repa studied under his uncle until he was eleven at least, that is in 1481. We still do not know how or when he met his master, but this would make him 37 at the time of Tsangnyön's death in 1507. Götsang Repa's large scale printing of texts, including his previously printed biography of Tsangnyön was therefore done at the age of 61, in 1531, and he passed away before reaching the age of 73.

E.Gene Smith notes that Dhongthong Rinpoche, in his *Important Events in Tibetan History,* Delhi, 1968, p.72 mentions a Nyingmapa by the name of Natsho Rangdrol *(sNa-tshogs Rang-grol)* who was born in 1494 (which was a tiger year) but Smith dismisses the identification of our author with this master, even though this was one of Götang Repa's names. Nevertheless, Smith's entry on this author in Dan Martin's bibliography supplies him with the birth and death dates of that very same Nyingma master, even though this would have made Götsang Repa only thirteen at the time of Tsangnyön's death. That there is a conflation of two masters is evident from Smith's entry in the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center data base,[179] where Götsang Repa's teacher is given as the Bhutanese Nyingma master Pema Lingpa *(Pad-ma Gling-pa)* and his lineage as that of Ratna Lingpa *(Ratna Gling-pa),* while the works attributed to him are Demchok Nyengyu *(bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud)* teachings and the biographies of Rechungpa and Tsangnyön.

Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dongyu Nyima *(Khams-sprul Rin-po-che, Don-brgyud Nyi-ma),* had previously made the same mis-identification, giving Götsang Repa the dates (1494–1570) in his edition of Götsang Repa's biography of Rechungpa, which is probably the source for the TBRC dates.

The remaining six folios of Götsang Repa's autobiography will hopefully be found and cast light on the presently dark land of his adult life.

Editions

Götsang Repa's biography of Rechungpa was available to me in eight editions:

1 A Rechung Puk *(Ras-chung-phug)* edition, a xylograph of poor quality, contained in the Bell collection in the India Office library (acquired in 1933). 248 folios.

2 A Bhutanese edition: *The Biography of Ras-chuṅ* by Natso Rangdrol *(sNa-tshogs-raṅ-grol)*. Published by the Tango Monastic Community, Tango Monastery, Thimpu, Bhutan, in April 1982. It is from a rare Bhutanese manuscript in the library of Lobpön Kunlek *(sLob-dpon Kun-legs)*.

3 Tashi Jong edition: *The life of Ras-chung (1083[sic]-1161)* by Götsang Repa (1494–1570); Volume three of *Bka'-brgyud-pa Hagiographies: A collection of rnam-thar of eminent master (sic) of Tibetan Buddhism*. Compiled and edited by Khamtrul Döngyu Nyima *(Khams-sprul Don-brgyud Nyi-ma)*. Himachel Pradesh: Khampa Gar Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Pang, Tibetan Craft Community, Tashijong, Palampur, H.P. (India) 1973. The manuscript is stated to be a careful copy of a print from the blocks preserved at Ras-chung Phug. 697 pages.

4 Kulu Manali edition: 342 folios. The publisher's colophon states:[180]

> This precious biography and songs of Lord Vajrapāṇi was newly printed at the seat of the father and son lords of practice—the Cetari retreat centre of Kulu Manali—by the second in the hereditary succession of the lord of siddhas, Heruka Śākya Śrī the eldest holder of the lineage of maturation and liberation; the precious unrivalled unequalled bodhisattva who is the illuminating daylight of the teachings of the practice-lineage during the darkness of the five kinds of degeneration: supreme Ngawang Yeshe Rangdrol *(Ngag-dbang Ye-shes Rang-grol)* [i.e., Apo Rinpoche *(A-pho Rin-po-che)*] at the hereditary seat of the practice centre of Kulu Manali Cetari.

5 Quinghai edition: mTsho-sngon mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1992, p. 676. Reproduced in Western format from an example, owned by the Yershong Tulku, Gendun Gyamtso *(gYer-gshong sPrul-sku dGe-'dun rGya-mtsho),* of an edition previously published (according to the colophon)[181] in Yershong Samten Chöpel Ling *(gYer-gshong bSam-gtan Chos-'phel Gling)* monastery in Amdo, on the instruction and patronage of Lubum Kachupa Tashi Chödrak *(Klu-'bum dKa'-bcu-pa bKra-shis Chos-grags),* in an iron-pig year.[182]

6 A microfilm in the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP)[183] of a manuscript that was photographed in 1997. It is written in *dbu-med* script and consists of 101 folios, though two are missing from this manuscript. The title page, which uses the archaic terminating particle *s.ho,* gives both a short title: *Ras-chung ka-'bum[sic., bka'-'bum] 'The Hundred Thousand Teachings of Ras-chung'* and a long title: *rJe btsun Ras-chung pa'i rnam-mgur mthong-pa rang-sgrol (sic, rang-grol) skal-ldan dad-pa'i gsol 'debs dri-med 'tshangs dbyangs 'brug-sgra 'The Thunder of the Stainless Brahma-speech: The songs and life of venerable Rechung that spontaneously liberate upon being seen; a supplication by the worthy faithful.'*

The author is listed as Rechungpa himself, but it is identical to the Götsang Repa text apart from some minor differences in the colophon, where there is a different concluding prayer and a scribe's colophon written in misspelt *yig-chung*. He states that it was written in the Charchab retreat centre (*Char-chab Grub-khang* [*sic.* the correct spelling is *sGrub-khang*], which he also calls Charchab[184] Dolkang *(Char-chab 'Dol-gang),* a place blessed by many previous lamas, and gives his name as Menmo Tukjé *(dMan-mo Thugs-rje)*. There is a prayer to Rechungpa and a praise of the beauty of the locality.

7 A text of 376 folios published in 1979 from a manuscript from Khyungmar *(Khyung-dmar)* in Ladakh, which is entitled *'The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel' from the Garland of Inexhaustible Adornments: The precious liberation of the Lord of Yogins, Vajrakīrti*.[185] Vajrakīrti is the Sanskrit for Dorje Drakpa, Rechungpa's name. This gives the initial impression that it is the lost twelfth-century *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*. However, the text is merely Götsang Repa's version apart from a change of colophon and attribution of authorship. Although the 1979 publication credits Götsang Repa as the author, the text itself gives the author's name as Gadé Gyaltsen *(dGa'-bde rGyal-mtshan),* though this could be another of his many names.

The title is given as *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel from an Adorning Garland of Never-ending Jewels: The precious Life-story of the Lord of Yogins, Vajrakīrti*[186] *(rDo-rje Grags-pa)*. This may preserve the full title of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po)* compilation by Sumpa, the pupil of Rechungpa. Nevertheless, as in the Götsang Repa texts, the introduction contains a passage in which the text's title is given as *The Radiance of Wisdom: A Mirror that reveals the precious path to wisdom and liberation (rNam-mkhyen Thar-lam gSal-bar sTon-pa'i Me-long Ye-shes sNang-ba),*[187] in contradiction to the title page and in conformity with the title of the Götsang Repa versions. This appears to be evidence that this is the Götsang Repa version with solely the title on the first page changed for this version, without the resulting internal discrepancy being noticed.

The fact that this text is otherwise identical with Götsang Repa led to the title page of the Delhi reprint having the subtitle: *A version of the redaction made by Götsang Repa sNa-tshogs-rang-grol*.

However, the only obvious differences between the two versions are in the colophons. Where the colophon from the original *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po)* is about to be reproduced, Götsang Repa writes:

> Those were the thirty-one chapters [of the main part of this biography], which conclude the third part: How he finally traversed the levels and paths, and so on; established the best, medium and least pupils in the three kinds of results and brought benefit through every connection; manifested the three kāyas, and, without abandoning his body, went to the pure realms. The main part [of the biography] is concluded.[188]

Gadé Gyaltsen *(dGa'-bde rGyal-mtshan)* instead of all this, merely has:

> That comprises the part on miscellaneous advice, and thus [it] is completely concluded.[189]

However, the phrase 'miscellaneous advice' *(zhal-gdams thor-bu)* appears, suspiciously, in both texts just a little further along, when Sumpa describes his sources:[190]

Where both versions reach the point that states, 'Until space is destroyed, countless, inconceivable emanations will appear, infinite and indescribable,'[191] Gadé Gyaltsen inserts his own colophon.[192]

> The holy heart-sons of the guru: Sanggyé Tönyang, Gyalwa Lo and Dampa Sumpa composed the holy guru's life-story entitled *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*. I used this as the basis and supplemented it with the oral tradition of his pupils, and the life-stories and song-collections of pupils in Ü and Tsang that have come into my hands, [using] whatever was worthy to promulgate and avoiding interpolation. [I,] the mountain dweller Gade Gyaltsen, who has been moistened by the venerable one's rain of compassion, compiled this life story of the venerable guru entitled *An Adorning Garland of Never-ending Jewels*. I pray to the gurus and ḍākiṇīs to forgive me if any error has been made.

There then commences in both texts an account of Rechungpa's pupils, with minor variations, particularly in the beginning of that passage.[193] Most noticeable is that Khyungtsangpa's life story is absent in Gadé Gyaltsen *(dGa'-bde rGyal-mtshan),* while it follows that of the other pupils in Götsang Repa.[194]

Gadé Gyaltsen then concludes with a four-line verse,[195] while Götsang Repa has the first two of those lines but continues with another seven[196] different lines. Götsang Repa then writes that the text is concluded[197] and adds a long prayer[198] before writing his own colophon.[199]

Thus, the texts are almost identical. The origin of Gadé Gyaltsen's version is a mystery. The text is a hand-written manuscript however, and it seems that it was never printed. There is the possibility that Gadé Gyaltsen is merely a different name for Götsang Repa, for he claimed to have many names, but why should he change his own text in this manner? Śākya Rinchen in the eighteenth century in Bhutan clearly knew Rechungpa's biography from this version of the text, for he cites Gadé Gyaltsen as his source.[200] This does not appear to be a local Bhutanese variation, as the Delhi reprint is from a manuscript in Ladakh.

Sang-gyé Darpo: *a heap of gems with a swirling thousand lights: A Dharma History of the Kagyu, [which] illuminates the teaching of the Sugata (bDe-gshegs bs Tan-pa gSal-byed bKa-brgyud Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas Rin-chen sPungs-pa 'Od-stong 'Khyil-ba)*

Author: Sang-gyé Darpo *(Sangs-rgyas Dar-po)*. Date: 1544 (or 1568).

E.Gene Smith lists Sang-gyé Darpo as one of six authors who were in 'the school of Tsangnyön Heruka' and ascribes to him a biography of Götsangpa Gönpo Dorje (*rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rDo-rje,* 1189–1258), which was compiled from eight earlier sources (one of which was the biography by Gyadangpa Dechen Dorje *(rGya-ldang-pa bDe-chen rDo-rje)* in 1540.[201] In the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre database[202] it is said that Sang-gyé Darpo wrote his biography of Götsangpa in 1540 and that in 1548 he requested Pema Karpo to write a biography of Tsangpa Gyaré and the following year asked him to write his autobiography, which seems somewhat suspect as then Pema Karpo was only 21- or 22-years old.

In the collection of E.Gene Smith, there is an unpublished text in eighty-seven folios that we shall examine here. Only the first half of the title is clearly legible on the title page, but the title reappears in the colophon.[203]

The text commences with the history of Buddhism in India, and includes only brief descriptions of the lives of Rechungpa and his followers. Sang-gyé Darpo appears to identify himself as a Drukpa Kagyupa more than a Rechung Kagyupa, for he emphasises Gampopa and the Drukpa succession over Rechungpa's lineage, even though he repeats passages verbatim from Tsangnyön Heruka's *Commentary and Outline for the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra*.

He quotes his principal sources in the concluding verses,[204] but owing to metrical restriction, the titles are abbreviated and vague. In addition, they appear to have suffered scribal corruption. They are:

1 *The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sNgon)* by Ebsang Tsewa *(E-bzang rTse-ba)*. Perhaps *The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sNgon-po)* of Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal *('Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal)*.

2 A Dharma History *(Chos-'byung)* by Trupubu *(Khru-phu-bu)*. Perhaps this refers to Tropu Lotsawa's *(Khro-phu lo-tsā-ba) A Dharma History of Mahākaruṇika (Thugs-rje Chen-po'i Chos-'byung),* which is listed as a source in the nineteenth-century *A Dharma History of Amdo (A-mdo Chos-'byung)*.[205]

3 *Opening the Eyes: A Dharma History of the Kagyu (bKa'-brgyud Chos-'byung Mig-'byed)* by Chen-nga Sönam Gyaltsen *(sPyan-mnga' bSod-nams rGyal-mtshan)*.[206] This is referred to in *The Lhorong Dharma History (lHo-rong Chos-'byung)*[207] and in *A Dharma History of Amdo (A-mdo Chos-'byung)* as *The Thousand lights that Open the Eyes: a Dharma History* by the twenty-second Chen-nga, Sönam Gyaltsen *(sPyan-snga nyer-gnyis-pa bSod-nams rGyal-mtshan gyi Chos-'byung mig-'byed 'od-stong)*. The Sang-gyé

Darpo manuscript has the meaningless *mig-'jeng,* which could be read as a scribal corruption of *mig-'dzad,* but the evidence of *A Dharma History of Amdo* reveals that the *je* is a corruption of—or what appears in this manuscript to be an erroneous overwriting of—*bye*.[208]

4 *A Dharma History of the Kagyu (bKa'-brgyud Chos-'byung)* by Khedrub Rechen Chöje Sharka *(mKhas-grub Ras-chen Chos-rje Shar-ka)*. This may or may not be the Sharkha Rechen *(Shar-kha Ras-chen)* who appears in the succession of the Demchog Nyengyu *(bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud)* lineage compiled in the early sixteenth century by Changchub Zangpo *(Byang-chub bZang-po)*.[209] Sharkha Rechen's teacher's teacher, Jampeyang Rinchen Gyaltsen *('Jam-dpa'i-dbyangs Rin-chen rGyal-mtshan),* was born in 1453 and died in 1517. Only if there were no great difference in their ages, could Sharkha Rechen be the same person, and writing in the early sixteenth century at the earliest.

Sang-gyé Darpo adds that he relied upon many other texts, the oral tradition of his teachers and works written by his fellow pupils.

He says that he completed his text in the year known as 'namjung' *(rnams-byung,* in error for *rnam-'byung*) and 'earth-dragon', which was 1568. However, he states that this was thirty-eight years after the passing of Tsangnyön Heruka *(gangs can grub mchog gtsang smyon he ru ka/gshegs nas sum cu rtsa brgyad 'das pa'i mthar),* which would place Tsangnyön Heruka's death (counting inclusively as is usual in Tibetan) in 1531.

We find a similar error also in Götsang Repa's biography of Tsangnyön Heruka also, which states that he died in his fifty-sixth year in the fifth lunar month of the *rabjung (rab-byung)* or water-hare *(chu-yos)* year, which would be either 1483 or 1543,[210] but this is simply a scribal error, for the *rabjung* year is the *fire*-hare *(me-yos)* year (1507)—the water-hare is *dzeché (mdzes-byed)*—[211] and Tsangnyön's birth year is given correctly as *anggir (ang-gir)* or water-monkey[212] (1452). Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal states that Tsangnyön Heruka was born in the water-monkey year[213] and died in the *rabjung* or fire-female-hare year *(rab byung zhes bya ba me mo yos kyi lo)*.[214]

As for Sangyé Darpo, thirty-eight years after Tsangnyön's death in 1507 would be about 1544, which is a wood-dragon year, a.k.a *tromo (khro-mo)* but with no neighbouring year having a name similar to *namjung (rnam-'byung)*. The Tibetan for wood-dragon, *shing-'brug,* could easily be corrupted to *sa-'brug,* meaning earth-dragon, but the specific name of *namjung (rnam-'byung)* appears to negate the possibility of scribal corruption. However, Sang-gyé Darpo also states that he was writing 288 years after the deaths of Götsangpa *(rGod-tshang-pa)* and Yangdak Gön *(Yang-dag dGon),* who both died in 1258, but that would mean Sang-gyé Darpo was writing in 1545 (counting inclusively). He also gives the number of 357 years after Lingrepa's *(Gling-ras-pa)* death, which occurred in 1188, which yields 1544. He also says 392 years have passed since Gampopa's death (in 1153), which also yields 1544. The majority of his calculations therefore do seem to point to around 1544. According to Smith, he composed his biography of Götsangpa in 1540; and, as described above, he is recorded as communicating with a young Pema Karpo in 1548 and 1549. All this evidence points to 1544 as the year in which the text was composed, and that the year given in the text is an error.

The other possibility is that the year of 1568 is correct, but that Sangyé Darpo miscalculated by dropping two twelve-year cycles in each case of the passage of time. The Tibetan system does not have a linear numeral succession of years, but a stew of

elements and animals, with a sixty-year cycle comprised of five cycles of twelve animals each. Sang-gyé Darpo may have miscalculated in working out how many years separated the earth-male-dragon of 1568 from the fire-female-hare of 1507. The hare directly precedes the dragon in the twelve-year cycle, and the five elements succeed each other in male-female pairs, forming a ten-year cycle. So perhaps Sang-gyé Darpo ahould have said sixty-two inclusive years had passed since 1507, but that seems too long a time for Sang-gyé Darpo to have been a direct pupil of Tsangnyön. However, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal does not include Sang-gyé Darpo in his extensive list of Tsangnyön Heruka's pupils,[215] yet it seems unlikely, however weak his mathematics, that he would erroneously think that the passing of sixty-two years was only thirty-eight years. But it is even more unlikely that Sang-gyé Darpo could have made an error over what year he was writing in, and as both names of the year are specified, scribal corruption seems less likely. Therefore it may well be his mathematics that are at fault and that he was not a direct pupil of Tsangnyön.

Kunga Rinchen: *Life stories of the bKa'-brgyud lamas (bKa'-brgyud Bla-ma-rnams kyi rNam-thar)*

Author: The Drigung Dharma-Lord Kunga Rinchen (*'Bri-gung Chos-rje Kun-dga' Rin-chen,* 1475–1527). Date: 1508.

This text occurs within the *Miscellaneous Writings (bKa'-'Bum Thor-bu)* of Kunga Rinchen, abbot of the principal Drigung seat.[216] There is no biography of Rechungpa within this text, but there is a biography of Milarepa in which Rechungpa appears.[217]

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa: *A Garland of Jewel-lights: The life stories of the long Saṃvara-karṇa-tantra lineage. (bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud las brGyud-pa Ring-lugs kyi rNam-thar Nor-bu 'Od kyi Phreng-ba)*

Author: the third Drukchen *('Brug-chen),* Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (*'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa,* 1478–1523).

The third Drukchen, was the first successor to the Drukpa Kagyu lineage through incarnation, but his seat was separate from that of his predecessor, Kunga Paljor (*Kun-dga' dPal-'byor,* 1428–76), which remained under the control of the second Drukchen's family and entourage.[218] The teachings of Rechungpa were of great importance for the Drukpa Kagyu and Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa *('Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa)* enlarged the Rechungpa corpus of teachings. He is said to have obtained these instructions from a vision of Rechungpa that he had in 1508. In a nineteenth-century history of the lineage, he is said to have demonstrated to a group of Drukpa Kagyu masters how Rechungpa appeared, floating naked in space, with his hands in the symbolic gesture of teaching the

Dharma.[219] To give an example of the difference between a textual and oral account, I was told by the Drukpa Kagyu tulku Chögön Rinpoche *(Chos-dgon Rin-po-che)* that Rechungpa had come to visit the third Drukchen as an old man whom all others present also saw.[220]

The third Drukchen thus received a 'direct lineage' *(nye-brgyud)* of the *Nyengyu,* as opposed to a 'long lineage' *(ring-brgyud)* transmitted from Rechungpa through a succession of teachers. He compiled these teachings in his *New Writings of the Rechung Nyengyu (Ras-chung sNyan-rgyud Yig-gsar)*[221] and *The New Rechung Karṇatantra (sNyan-rgyud Ras-chung sNyan-rgyud gSar-ma)*.[222]

He also compiled *Writings on the Saṃvara-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud kyi Yig-cha),*[223] which contains *A Garland of jewel-lights: The life stories of the long Saṃvara-karṇa-tantra lineage (bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud las brgyud-pa ring-lugs kyi rnam-thar Nor-bu 'od kyi phreng-ba)*.[224]

Unlike other Nyengyu lineage histories—which have Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, Milarepa and then Rechungpa—the third Drukchen lists the lineage as Tilopa, Nāropa, Maitripa, Tipupa and then Rechungpa. Nevertheless, the account of Rechungpa's life is brief,[225] with the entire lineage described without a division into separate life-stories. He evidently used Gyadangpa *(rGya-ldang-pa)* as a source, for Rechungpa's life-story similarly ends abruptly after teaching tree-goddesses, without his last years being described.[226]

Karmapa Mikyö Dorje: *An Ocean of Kagyu Songs (bKa'-brgyud mGur-tsho) a.k.a Rain of Wisdom (ye-shes char-'bebs)*

Author: Mikyö Dorje (*Mi-bskyod rDo-rje,* 1507–54). Date: compiled circa 1542.

Its full title is *The Essence of the Ocean of the Definitive Meaning; self-liberating, naturally present, brilliant bliss; a rain of wisdom; the vajra songs of the Kagyu lamas; the swift path that manifests the supreme attainment (mChog gi dngos-grub mngon-du-byed-pa'i myur-lam bka'-brgyud bla-ma-rnams kyi rdo-rje'i mgur-dbyangs ye-shes char-'bebs rang-grol lhun-grub bde-chen rab-'bar nges-don rgya-mtsho'i snying-po)*.

Mikyö Dorje (1507–54) was eighth in the succession of the Karmapa incarnations, and authored a number of texts (the only other Karmapas to have a quantitatively significant literary output were the third and fifteenth Karmapas). This particular text is a compilation of songs produced by figures in the Karma Kagyu lineage, the earliest being Tilopa. Subsequent generations have enlarged the work by adding the songs of subsequent masters down to this century. The Milarepa selection[227] does not feature Rechungpa, but Rechungpa's song to the King of Nepal is included.[228] The Milarepa and Rechungpa songs are all repeated verbatim from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar),* which therefore still took precedence over Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* some sixty years after the latter's publication, and in spite of the seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso (*Chos-grags rGya-mtsho,* 1454–1505), having composed a praise to Tsangnyön Heruka.

Changchub Zangpo: *Saṃvara-ḍāka-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud)*

Author: compiled by Changchub Zangpo *(Byang-chub bZang-po)*. Date: sixteenth century.

A biography of Rechungpa that claims to be of an early date is to be found in *The Life Stories of the Wish-fulfilling-Jewel Lineage (brGyud-pa Yid-bzhin Nor-bu'i rNam-par-thar-pa),* which is contained within *the Saṃvara-ḍāka-karṇa-tantra.*[229] This was compiled by Changchub Zangpo, probably early in the sixteenth century. In this history of the Rechungpa lineage from Khyungtsangpa, the biographies of Tilopa[230] and Nāropa[231] are attributed to Marpa, that of Marpa[232] to Milarepa, that of Milarepa to Rechungpa, and that of Rechungpa[233] to Ra Shernangpa, also known as Rinchen Drak, his attendant. If this were a biography of Rechungpa written by his attendant, it would be of great value. Unfortunately, although the colophons of Tibetan texts can usually be taken on trust, these biographies are not from an early date, and their attributed authorship is spurious; it is probably a late devotional attribution. The biography of Rechungpa[234] is just a crude summary of the same source as used by Gyadangpa. Also, a comparison of the biography of Nāropa,[235] which is attributed to Marpa,[236] with the biographies by Gampopa, Lama Shang and Gyadangpa reveal that it is a later development within the narrative tradition. Toricelli and Naga edited and translated the Tilopa biography, but unfortunately accepted its attribution to Marpa on face value.[237]

Some of the members in this lineage were tentatively dated by E.Gene Smith in his list of contents, but those dates are contradicted by the internal evidence of the biographies. Jatangpa Deleg Rinchen *(Bya-btang-pa bDe-legs Rin-chen)* died in 1337 and not Smith's 1277. Therefore, Ziji Gyaltsen's *(gZi-brjid rGyal-mtshan)* dates are 1290–1360; Dushabpa Rinchen Gyamtso *(Dus-zhabs-pa Rin-chen rGya-mtsho)* died in 1400 and his life story was written in 1417; Jampéyang Rinchen Gyaltsen's *('Jam-dpa'i-dbyangs Rin-chen rGyal-mtshan)* dates are therefore 1453–1517. The next biography is of an undated Kunkhyen Jampa Serchok *(Kun-mkhyen Byams-pa gSer-mchog),* who is followed by his pupil Sharkha Rechen *(Shar-kha Ras-chen),* who was the teacher of Changchub Zangpo. Therefore, the text was probably compiled around the middle of the sixteenth century.

The text itself consists, to a large extent, of the work of Sharkha Rechen, Kunga Darpo *(Kun-dga' Dar-po)* and Changchub Zangpo. Sharkha Rechen might be the Rechen Chöjé Sharka *(Ras-chen Chos-rje Shar-ka)* that Sang-gyé Darpo cites as a source.

Pawo Tsukla Trengwa: *A Feast for scholars (mKhas-pa'i dGa'-ston)* by Pawo Tsukla Trengwa *(dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'phreng-ba)*

Full title: A Feast for Scholars That Illuminates the Origins of the Cakravartins of the Sacred Dharma *(Dam-pa'i Chos kyi 'Khor-lo-bsgyur-ba-rnams kyi Byung—ba gSal-bar-byed-pa mKhas-pa'i dGa'-ston)*. Author: Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (*dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba,* 1504–66). Date: written between 1545 and 1565.

This mammoth work, by one of the principal Karma Kagyu masters of his time, contains a brief biography of Rechungpa[238] that primarily repeats Tsangnyön Heruka's version. In spite of the author's reputation, there is a disappointing lack of scholarly analysis, and the material is abused for didactic reasons.

Drukchen Pema Karpo's *A Dharma History: the sun that opens the lotus of the teachings (Chos-'byung bsTan-pa'i Padma rGyas-pa'i Nyin-byed)*

Author: the fourth Drukchen, Pema Karpo (*'Brug-chen, Pad-ma dKar-po,* 1527–92). Date: 1575.

Pema Karpo was the successor, through incarnation, of the third Drukchen, Jamyang Drakpa *('Jams-dbyangs Grags-pa)*. Pema Karpo is the most famous author in the history of the Drukpa Kagyu tradition. He made his own compilations of instruction texts on the Nyengyu of Rechungpa.[239] His history contains brief biographies of Rechungpa[240] and Milarepa,[241] influenced by Tsangnyön Heruka and his followers, but interestingly these two biographies, on occasion contradict each other. He also compiled a two-volume text on the teachings of Rechungpa: *The Ancient Writings of the Ḍāka-Karṇatantra (mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud kyi Yig-rnying)*.

After Pema Karpo's death, a dispute between the promoters of two candidates for recognition as his rebirth divided this tradition into two: The Chang Druk *(Byang-'Brug),* which means 'the Northern Drukpa' and the Lho Druk *(lHo-'brug),* which means 'the southern Drukpa'). The Lho Druk created the territorial entity of Bhutan and has been important in the preservation and composition of texts. Of particular importance for this book is the lineage history by Śākya Rinchen, who, from 1744 to 1755, was the Ninth Je Khenpo *(rJe-mkhan-po),* or head-abbot, of Bhutan.

The Rechungpa teachings continued to have importance in the Chang Druk. For example, the fourth Yongdzin, Jampal Pawo *(Yongs-'dzin, 'Jam-dpal dPa-bo,* 1527–92) composed a commentary on the Karṇatantra.[242]

Talung Ngawang Namgyal: *A Wonderful Ocean: A Dharma History (Chos-'byung Ngo-mtshar rGya-mtsho)*

Author: Talung Ngawang Namgyal (sTag-lung Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal, 1571–1626). Date: 1609.

The Talung Kagyu was founded by Talungpa Tashi Pal *(sTag-lung-pa bKra-shis-dpal)* (1142–1210). This lineage maintains a transmission of Rechungpa's teachings. Talung Ngawang Namgyal was a hierarch of this lineage. One of his later successors, Talungpa Ngawang Tenpay Nyima *(sTag-lung-pa Ngag-dbang bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma)* (born 1788), who became the abbot of Talung in 1804, wrote a commentary on the Rechung Nyengyu

(Ras-chung sNyan-rgyud).[243] Nevertheless, the emphasis in this text is on the succession through Gampopa, so that Rechungpa does not feature prominently.[244] The list of Milarepa's pupils is derived directly from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. This school came to focus primarily on the Longchen Nyingthig *(Klong-chen sNying-thig)* teachings of Jigme Lingpa *('Gigs-med Gling-pa)*. Perceived to be on the verge of extinction during the seventies, it has now considerably revived, and certain Nyingma masters had also preserved its teachings.

Shamarpa Chökyi Döndrup: *Amitāyus empowerment (Tshe-dpag-med gyi dBang-bskur)*

Author: Shamarpa Chökyi Döndrup (*Zhwa-dmar Chos-kyi Don-grub,* 1695–1732). Date: early eighteenth century.

This Amitāyus *(Tshe-dpag-med)* empowerment text for long life, ironically composed by a short lived lama, includes a history of the transmission of the practice, and relies heavily on Götsang Repa as a source.

Drigung Tendzin Pemay Gyaltsen: *The Great Drigungpa Succession ('Bri-gung-pa Chen-po'i gDan-rabs)*

Full title: *The Golden Garland: The Origin of the Great Drigungpa Succession, the Protectors of the Essence of the Teaching of the Definitive Meaning (Nges-don bsTan-pa'i sNying-po mGon-po 'Bri-gung-pa Chen-po'i gDan-rabs Chos-kyi-byung-tshul gSer-gyi-phreng-ba)*. Author: Drigung Tendzin Pemay Gyaltsen *('Bri-gung bsTan-'dzin Pad-ma'i rGyal-mtshan)* (born 1700). Date: eighteenth century.

Composed by a hierarch of the Drigung Kagyu, it emphasises Gampopa so that Rechungpa does not feature prominently.[245]

Katok Tsewang Norbu: *A Clear, Brief, Correct Description of a Definite Chronology; The seed of biographies of some holy ones, such as Marpa. Mila, Dakpo and Atiśa (Mar Mi Dwags-po Jo-bo-rje yab-sras sogs dam-pa 'ga'-zhig gi rnam-thar sa-bon dus kyi nges-pa brjod-pa dag-ldan nyung-gsal)*

Author: Katok Tsewang Norbu (*Kaḥ-thog Tshe-dbang Nor-bu,* 1698–1755).[246] Date: 1742.

Katok Tsewang Norbu was a successor of the Katok Nyingma lineage but also had close ties with the Kagyupa lineage. He was a teacher of the seventh Drukchen, Trinlay Shingta (*'Brug-chen Phrin-las Shing-rta,* 1718–66) of the Drukpa Kagyu and the eighth Situ, Situ Chökyi Jungné (*Situ Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas,* 1700–77) of the Karma Kagyu. His text is concerned with establishing the correct dates for the early Kagyu masters, including Rechungpa, but reveals how muddied the waters had become for his solutions only create further problems and result in obviously inaccurate dates for Rechungpa.

Shakya Rinchen: *Life-stories of the Kagyu, which are like a Golden Garland (dKar-brgyud kyi rnam-thar gser-gyi phreng-ba lta-bu)*

Author: Gyalwa Shakya Rinchen *(rGyal-ba Śākya Rin-chen)*. Date: mid-eighteenth century.

Śākya Rinchen was the ninth Jé Khenpo *(rJe-mkhan-po)* (head-abbot) of Bhutan from 1744 to 1755. This lineage history is contained in the first volume of *The Collected Works of The second Lord of Munis, Gyalwa Shakya Rinchen (Thub-dbang Gnyis-pa rGyal-ba Śākya Rin-chen gyi gSung-'bum)*.

The first volume is entirely comprised of the biographies of selected individuals of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage. It commences with Tilopa *(Tīllipa)* and Nāropa, omits Marpa, but continues with Milarepa. The next two life-stories are of Siddharājñī *(Ma-cig Grub-pa'i rGyal-mo),*[247] the female Indian teacher of Rechungpa, and a biography of Rechungpa himself.[248] Both of these are derived primarily, but not entirely, from the Götsang Repa text, though he was using the version ascribed to Gadé Gyaltsen *(dGa-bde rGyal-mtshan)*.

Situ Pema Nyinché Wangpo: *The Swift Descent of Wisdom: an empowerment of Avalokita-Jinasāgara ('Phags pa mchog spy an ras gzigs rgyal ba rgya msho'i dbang bskur ye shes myur 'bebs)*

Author: the ninth Situ, Pema Nyinché Wangpo (*Padma Nyin-byed dBang-po,* 1774–1853). Date: before 1853.

This text, consisting of thirty-four folios in cursive script, is for ritual use, and includes a history of the transmission of the practice, which is formally read out at the time of the initiation. It was composed by the ninth Tai Situpa, a leading incarnation of the Karma Kagyu, and includes an account of Rechungpa's introduction of the Jinasāgara practice into Tibet that differs from those found in the biographies. Jinasāgara was introduced into the Karma Kagyu at the time of the second Karmapa, and since that time has been the traditional meditation deity of the Karmapas.

The Golden Garland of the Railing Kagyu *(Rwa-lung bka'-brgyud gSer gyi 'phreng-ba)*

Author: unknown. Date: compiled circa 1799–1803.

This is a history of the Bardruk (*'Bar-'Brug*) lineage of the Drukpa Kagyu. It contains a biography of Rechungpa,[249] the majority of which is identical (apart from some variation in the first few lines and certain other passages) with that in the NGMPP's *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, commencing with Vajradhara,* which was probably compiled in the early fourteenth century, but containing a distinctive narrative tradition from the thirteenth century.

The Dharma History of Guru Tashi *(Gu-bkra'i Chos-'byung)*

Full title: An Ocean of Wonderful Accounts that Gladden Scholars: An elegant discourse that illuminates the origin of the profound Dharma of the definitive meaning: the early translations, the great secret, the essence of the Teachings. *(bsTan pa'i snying po gsang chen snga 'gyur nges don zab mo'i chos kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad mkhas pa dga' byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho).* Author: Guru bKra-shis. Date: between 1807 and 1813.

This history of the Nyingma tradition codifies Rechungpa as a *tertön (gter-ston)* or 'treasure-revealer', which is characteristic of the Nyingma tradition, but untypical of the Kagyu.

A History of Drakar Taso *(Grub-pa'i gnas-chen brag-dkar rta-so'i gnas dang gnas-rab bla-ma brgyud-pa'i lo-rgyus mdo-tsam brjod-pa mos-ldan dad-pa'i gdung-sel drang-srong dga'-ba'i dal-gtam)*. Author: Trinlay Gyamtso *('Phrin-las rGya-mtsho)*. Date: 1828.

Trinlay Gyamtso (born circa 1787), the abbot of Drakar Taso, composed this text in 1828. The available edition is a forty-eight-folio manuscript in *umay* script. As well as a history of the founding and succession of Drakar Taso, it includes a biography of Milarepa, for Drakar Taso was on of his principal retreat locations, though it had no permanent habitation until Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal established a monastery and printing house there.[250]

3
THE EVOLUTION OF MILAREPA'S BIOGRAPHY

Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* (1488)

Tsangnyön Heruka's (1452–1507) *The Life of Milarepa* has proved to be the most accessible work of Tibetan literature for other cultures. As early as the 1920s it was translated into English[1] and French.[2] It has so far inspired an Italian movie,[3] a comic-strip book,[4] a novelisation[5] and a French play.[6] Milarepa even served as a recondite ingredient for Iris Murdoch's Booker Prize winning novel *The Sea, the Sea* in 1978, in which the narrator searches in vain amongst Italian poets to find the songs of 'Milarepa', while the reader is tacitly assumed to know the identity of this 'poet'.[7] This Tibetan classic has also, inevitably, been the subject of doctoral theses.[8]

Tsangnyön Heruka made the lengthy account of Milarepa's life as a teacher into *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,*[9] primarily composed of songs within the setting of short prose narratives as a companion volume to *The Life of Milarepa*.[10] Thus the biography itself jumps from Milarepa's first years of solitude in the mountains, when he has overcome all his major obstacles, directly to his death and cremation, which demonstrate that he has achieved his goal—Buddhahood. Thus, unlike other hagiographies, the dramatic tension of the principal character's struggle to attain his goal moves directly to its dramatic resolution. Tsangnyön also transformed the third-person narrative of the earlier biographies into a first-person account, giving the narrative greater impact and an impression of authenticity.

Although it is under the above titles that the two volumes have become generally known in English, *The Life of Milarepa* is a free translation of the shortened Tibetan title *Mi-la'i rNam-thar,* which, as discussed in the introductory chapter literally means *The Liberation of Milarepa*. As for *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* this is, in contrast, an overly literal translation. The term 'hundred thousand' *('bum)* is frequently used in Tibetan to designate the collected works of an author, as in Kabum *(bKa'-'bum)* or *Sungbum (gSungs-'bum),* which could both be literally rendered as *'The Hundred Thousand Teachings of...'* but really means 'The Collected Works of…' If the collection is comprised solely of songs, then the title *Gurbum (mGur-'bum)* is invariably used. This term could be freely and more accurately translated as *'The Collected Songs of...'* or simply *The Songs of Milarepa*. Nevertheless, because of the ubiquity of the translation of this particular text as *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* it will be referred to here by that name.

Tsangnyön Heruka completed these two companion volumes over three centuries after the death of his subject. They are not the factual record of a life, but the climax of a long process of narrative development, to which Tsangnyön made significant additions derived from his visions. Neither are the songs, unlike those of other early masters, representative of Milarepa's own compositions, as a study of his songs through those three centuries shows a great deal of transformation and the creation of new songs.

These texts became popular amongst lay and monastic communities, even though their recurring theme is that one should avoid worldly and monastic life and meditate in remote places: the kind of life that the Tsangnyön Heruka himself led. However, this actually contributed to their popularity as they portray an inspiring ideal.

In particular, Tsangnyön's is the first author to explicitly present Milarepa as an ordinary being who attained enlightenment through the power of the vajrayāna, and not as an emanation of a Buddha. Also, Milarepa's hardships and diligence are now so exceptional, it demonstrates why there is no widespread attainment of enlightenment, in spite of the *vajrayāna's* power.

Rechungpa plays an important role in *The Life of Milarepa* by urging him to relate his 'autobiography'. This resulted in a popular belief that Rechungpa is the author. Even Oxford University's Bodleian Library classified its earliest acquisitions of *The Life of Milarepa* as being authored by Rechungpa. Towards the end of the eighth chapter, Tsangnyön declares that this is an exact record of the words of his teacher, who was Shara Rabjampa Sangye *(Sha-ra Rab-'byams-pa Sangs-rgyas)*. However, we see from Tsangnyön's biographies that he contributed a great deal to the narrative himself. Tsangnyön provides a summary of the contents of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* before continuing with a third-person narration of Milarepa's death and cremation.

In the concluding colophon, Tsangnyön identifies himself solely by the pseudonym Durtrö Rolpay Naljorpa *(Dur-khrod rol-pa'i rnal-'byor-pa)* 'the yogin who enjoys charnel grounds' and states that the biography came from his teacher's oral, secret transmission. Prior to Tsangnyön, the life and songs of Milarepa were closely guarded secrets, with warnings of divine punishment for those who made them public, but Tsangnyön Heruka made this secret tradition public, apparently confident that the fury of the ḍākiṇīs would not fall upon him.

Rechungpa is also the most prominent character in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* as he appears in eight chapters. It is a compilation of the work of generations of Milarepa bards who added or altered and expanded songs and narrative sections, presumably, as was the case with Tsangnyön, in the belief that they were blessed to reveal intrinsically genuine material. Only a few fragments of the original songs of Milarepa appear to survive, as in the works of Gampopa and Lama Shang.

This transformative song tradition is not usual, for songs, such as Rechungpa's, were normally written down during their lifetime and preserved unchanged. But it is the very malleability of the tradition of Milarepa songs that has made it so extensive in quantity and popularity.

Tsangnyön relates that Milarepa was born to a wealthy merchant and was named Töpa Gawa *(Thos-pa dGa'-ba)* or Töga for short. While Milarepa was still a child, his father died and a wicked uncle promised to look after the family, but expropriated their wealth, and treated Milarepa, his mother and his sister, Peta, as servants, refusing to give

Milarepa his patrimony when he reached the age of 14. Milarepa's mother commanded Milarepa to go and learn sorcery in central Tibet, in order to take revenge, threatening to commit suicide in front of him if he refused. Mila succeeded in mastering sorcery and caused the collapse of the uncle's home during a wedding party. Thirty-five members of the uncle's family were killed, but the uncle and his wife survived. Milarepa's mother then sent a message to Milarepa instructing him to intimidate the villagers, who might otherwise take revenge against her. Milarepa came to the outskirts of the village with a companion and invoked a hailstorm that destroyed the village harvest.

Milarepa, tormented by the thought of rebirth in hell as a result of his actions, searched for a teacher with instructions that could liberate him. His search ended with Marpa Chökyi Lodrö *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros),* who had spent many years in India obtaining the teachings that would form the central core of the Kagyu tradition. Marpa treats Milarepa with an apparently perverse cruelty. Marpa tells Milarepa that he has to accomplish certain tasks before he can receive the instructions that will liberate him from rebirth in hell. Marpa orders him to attack one region with hailstorms and another with lethal sorcery, but when he has done so, Marpa pretends to be horrified and commands him to bring the dead back to life, which Milarepa is of course unable to do, so he feels worse off than before. This part is often left out of summarized versions, such as the comic strip, as it contradicts the clear distinction between meditation as the path of good and sorcery as the path of evil.

Marpa then tells him to single-handedly build a round tower on the east of a mountain, but changes his mind when it is half-finished and orders Milarepa to demolish it and return the earth and stones to where he had obtained them. The same happens with a semi-circular tower to the west and a triangular tower to the north and then Milarepa begins work on a nine-storey tower. His back becomes an open sore from carrying stones, so that Damema *(bDag-med-ma),* Marpa's wife, takes pity on him and provides him with the requisite offerings so that he can attend initiations, but Marpa on recognising the offerings beats Milarepa and chases him out of the shrine room. Finally, Damema hatches a cunning plan. She forges a letter of recommendation, gets Marpa drunk and steals precious relics from his shrine. Milarepa then flees to Marpa's senior pupil, Ngoktön (rNgog-ston) taking with him the forged recommendation and the relics, claiming they are a gift from Marpa. But Milarepa is distraught when Ngok orders him to first cause a hailstorm upon a village, incidentally causing a great deal of death amongst the wildlife, but Ngoktön declares that no harm has been done as it has caused a karmic relationship with the dead animals, and to prove it brings them back to life with a snap of his fingers. Milarepa at last receives the longed-for instructions, but because he obtained them through deception, they fail to bring him any benefit.

Climactically, there is a gathering of all the principal characters at Marpa's home and a tense confrontation during which Milarepa's ruse is exposed. Ngoktön is petrified. Marpa's wife locks herself inside a room to avoid a beating and Milarepa loses all hope and decides on suicide. At that point, Marpa reveals that his treatment of Milarepa had been in order to purify his bad karma and that everyone, because of their motivation, is blameless, though he considers his wife a little at fault, but even so, it is now safe for her to come out of hiding.

Milarepa is given the secret meditation instruction and enters a meditation retreat. Eventually, he receives permission from Marpa to return to his village only to find his

house in ruins and his dead mother's bones inside. Disillusioned with the world, he gives away the property and lives in the mountains. Living on a diet of nettles, he becomes skeletal and green. *The Life of Milarepa* skips ahead at this point from autobiographical narrative to a third-person account of the end of Milarepa's life. In a much-quoted conversation that takes place not long before his death, Milarepa rebukes some of his pupils for believing that he is an emanation of a buddha, saying that this view constitutes slander against the vajrayāna, implying that it could not bring an ordinary being to buddhahood in one lifetime. Milarepa's death and the astonishing miraculous events that accompany it, including his coming back to life on the cremation pyre, demonstrate that he has indeed become a buddha.

The life of Tsangnyön Heruka

The works of Tsangnyön and his followers are crucial in the history of Kagyu biographies. These biographies, which were particularly focussed on early mendicant practitioners such as Milarepa, Rechungpa, Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, Götsangpa and Lorepa, eclipsed earlier versions and became a dominant influence over later generations.

There are three biographies of Tsangnyön written by his pupils. Two are by authors of biographies of Rechungpa: Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal[11] and Götsang Repa.[12] A third is by Rabjam Ngödrup Palbar *(Rab-'byams dNgos-grub dPal-'bar)*—which at present exists as only one known copy in the collection of E.Gene Smith,[13] but in a part of his collection that is in storage in Europe and to which he has been unable to gain access.[14] Tsangnyön Heruka was born in 1452. He became ordained as a child in his seventh year and his monastic name was Sangye Gyaltsen *(Sangs-rgyas rGyal-mtshan)*.[15] In his eighteenth year, according to Götsang Repa (i.e. in approximately 1466), but in his fourteenth, according to Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (i.e. 1470, though Tinchen Namgyal does seem to err by making events about three or four years too early), Tsangnyön fled from his monastery to go on pilgrimage. En route, he met Shara Rabjampa Sangye *(Shara Rab-'byams-pa Sangs-rgyas),* who was a holder of the Rechungpa lineages.[16] Shara Rabjampa Sangye had received an union of all Rechungpa lineages from his teacher, Ngawang Drakpa *(Ngag-dbang Grags-pa)* (1418–96), who was the holder of the Talung Kagyu lineage at Talung monastery and had given Shara the instruction to spread these karṇatantra teachings.[17] Therefore, though Tsangnyön Heruka is usually associated with the Drukpa Kagyu, the origins of his lineage lie in the Talung Kagyu, which has maintained a transmission of these teachings to the present day. Tsangnyön became his pupil and was swiftly able to generate heat and wear only cotton.[18] Shara gave Tsangnyön the name Chökyi Drakpa *(Chos-kyi Grags-pa)*. According to Lhatsun, Tsangnyön served as Shara's consort's attendant for six months,[19] which is usually an euphemism for sexual practices, which are central to the Rechungpa transmission. For example, one of the few texts said to have been written by Rechungpa is entitled *The List of the Profound Instructions from 'The Lower Entrance of the Glorious*

Saṃvara-karṇatantra ' *(dPal bde-mchog snyan-brgyud kyi 'og sgo las zab mo gdams pa'i tho-yig),* in which he declares:

> The perfect vessels for the secret method
> Are women with great lust,
> And similarly, [sexually] mature men,
> With perfect youth and bliss.[20]

He continues by saying that this method is not for those without desire, not yet sexually mature, nor for ascetics. The text, all in verse, is unabashed in setting forth the purpose and details of sexual practice. For example, it advises the practitioner not to be frightened of biting the woman on such places as the lips, breasts and nipples, because it will give her pleasure. It also advises where to kiss (the list starts with both eyes and culminates with the vagina in a rare example of a religious promotion of cunnilingus), where to pinch and where to scratch.[21] He calls this practice 'The supreme path of stainless bliss, the profound meaning, the one way travelled by the buddhas of the three times'.[22] However, it is necessary to make sure that one's consort is of the right kind. Another text from Rechungpa's lineage, *Examining the Signs of the* *Ḍākinīs* *(mKha'-'gro'i mtshan-brtags),* is entirely devoted to the evaluation of women as prospective partners in sexual practice.[23]

The biographies are usually very reticent about this aspect of their subjects' lives. In Tsangnyön's texts on Milarepa the only consorts Milarepa is said to have are the Tseringma mountain goddesses. Nevertheless, earlier texts do mention, in passing, his sexual partners and Milarepa's own instructions, preserved in Jamgon Kongtrul's *Treasury of Instructions* are specific about actual sexual practice, which he says is to be performed without shame, but in great secrecy.[24]

The marginalisation of sexual practices in Tibetan Buddhism is demonstrated by two texts composed by Shang Lotsawa *(Zhang Lo-tsā-ba)* (died 1237) that reveal these practices being concealed behind a dissembling condemnation of them. Shang Lotsawa studied with a great number of important contemporary teachers of various traditions, but, in terms of his own transmission of teaching, his importance lies in being a successor to a lineage that derives from Khyungtsangpa *(Khyung-tshang-pa),* an atypical but historically important monastic pupil of Rechungpa. In *The Great-bliss Light-consort,* Shang Lotsawa admonishes practitioners to use a woman who is entirely the product of one's own imagination, stating that using a real woman would be like riding a horse for the first time without a bridle or saddle, which would be disastrous for both.

However, in a subsequent text, intended for an even smaller readership, Shang Lotsawa instructs that the practice *has* be done with a real woman, in order to make the semen descend, be halted, be reversed and made to spread through the body. There are stages in this practice, starting with mastering semen while just looking at her breasts, etc., and a number of such stages culminates in actual penetration. During intercourse, the partners visualise each other as deities, the male reciting the female mantra and the female the male mantra. For each stage of the semen descent, etc., there are particular

stares, breathing exercises and visualisations. Shang Lotsawa does state that there are practices to cause a woman to become attracted, so that she will be a consort, but he balks at giving the details and directs the readers to their own teacher for private instruction.

To return to Tsangnyön, while he was thus a pupil of Shara, he had numerous visions and experiences of going to other realms, so that his fellow pupils considered him either a fraud or mad.[25] However his teacher passed on the transmission of all the *Karṇatantra* or *Nyengyu (sNyan-rgyud)* lineages to him, and authorised him to be his successor.

Tsangnyön departed to practise in various sacred sites, particularly at Tsari *(rTsa-ri)*.[26] This area is presently within Nang County on the border with the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The two counties to the west along the border comprise the area where Rechungpa spent the latter half of his life. Tsari itself became a place of pilgrimage after Tsangpa Gyaré, the founder of the Drukpa Kagyu and discoverer of Rechungpa termas, stayed there on retreat.

Tsangnyön abandoned his monastic costume and engaged in outrageous behaviour, such as offering people shit to eat and throwing urine over them, which surprisingly inspired a devotional response amongst the populace, who called him 'Tsari Pawo' *(rTsa-ri dPa'-bo)* meaning, 'the *Ḍāka* of Tsari'.[27] A *ḍāka* is the male equivalent of a *ḍākiṇī*, who are often depicted as wrathful deities inhabiting charnel grounds, but who are nevertheless enlightened practitioners or guardians of the vajrayāna.

Believing that normal behaviour would limit his ability to benefit beings, he covered himself in human ash, adorned himself with human grease and blood; severed fingers and toes from corpses and made them into a garland that he wound into his hair. He extracted intestine from corpses and made them into necklaces, armlets and anklets. Later in life he wore sartorially more upbeat carved, human-bone jewellery that were offered to him by devotees, but at this time, naked apart from these dead body parts, he would come into town, sing, dance, laugh and cry. With his penis erect, he chased women. Sometimes he bound his penis so that only his pubic hair was visible and chased men, shouting, 'Fuck me!' *(nga la rgyo shog)*.[28] He also drank urine, ate faeces, and threw them at people, who, unsurprisingly, were usually terrified by him. When he came to Lhasa, the people fled in fear, thinking he was a demon.[29] At this period in his life, those who felt devotion towards him called him Tsangpa Nyönpa *(gTsang-pa sMyon-pa),* which means 'the madman from Tsang'. Its shortened form is his well-known sobriquet Tsangnyön.[30] He had previously, in a vision of Hevajra, received the 'secret' name Tratung Gyalpo *(Khrag-thung rGyal-po),* which means 'King of Herukas'.[31] Tratung *(Khrag-thung),* which literally means 'blood-drinker', is the Tibetan for Heruka, and it is the general name for the meditation deities in the higher tantras. This appears to be the origin for the second part of the name by which he became well known: Tsangnyön Heruka.

However, around this time Tsangnyön went to visit his mother, and she insisted that he tone down his appearance, which, relatively speaking, he did, though he would still on occasion wear a human skin robe, and eat the brains and flesh of the dead.

Tsangnyön experienced a number of visions while in solitary retreat. Of particular importance is an experience he had while on retreat at a cave named Namkha Dzong ('Sky Castle') at Poto *(sPo-mtho Nam-mkha' rDzong),* where Milarepa had practiced centuries before. This was around 1477, when Tsangnyön was 25 years old. He had a vision in which Milarepa related his life-story to him. This will have greatly contributed towards the innovations included in Tsangnyön's retelling of Milarepa's life-story.[32]

Tsangnyön also told his pupils that he decided to write his Milarepa texts after having a vision of Nāropa while on retreat in one of Milarepa's caves. The vision of Nāropa recited a verse of praise to Milarepa, speaking in a mixture of Sanskrit and Tibetan. In Tsangnyön's biography of Marpa, Marpa goes to India as an old man and tells Nāropa about Milarepa. Tsangnyön then describes how not only Nāropa, but also the trees and hills all bow in the direction of Tibet as Nāropa recites the very verse that Tsangnyön had received in his vision. That passage has caused some authors to interpret Nāropa's dates so as to make him a contemporary of Milarepa. However, Nāropa had died in 1040, the year that Atiśa left India for Tibet, bringing relics from Nāropa's cremation with him and this was probably the year of Milarepa's birth.

In Tsangnyön's vision, Nāropa instructed him to compose the life and songs of Milarepa and make blockprints of them. Tsangnyön simultaneously saw a translator wearing paṇḍita clothes and carving block-prints. This is an important detail, as making blockprints would break the code of secrecy concerning Milarepa literature. Nāropa told Tsangnyön that he would find sponsors for the project in the area of Gungthang *(Gung-thang),* which had been the homeland of both Milarepa and Rechungpa. Nāropa also told Tsangnyön of five young women that he should start relationships with, for somehow this would guarantee the completion of what would be a difficult task for a wandering practitioner without any wealth.

Lhatsun's biography states that there was already a standard collection of Milarepa songs in existence. This must be *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGur-mchings dang bcas-pa).*[33] However, Tsangnyön took on the difficult task of tracking down additional songs over a wide geographical area. He found sponsors and brought together skilled craftsmen who carved the xylographic blocks for *The Life of Milarepa*. His sponsors asked him to postpone his plan to make blocks for the second volume, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* as they could not afford it. Tsangnyön refused, telling them that success was guaranteed because of the vision's prophecy and the presence of his five young girlfriends. Two years later, the task was completed and copies of his work began their wide circulation throughout the regions of Tibet.[34]

The contemporary king of Gungthang was Namgyal De *(rNam-rgyal lDe,* 1422–1502; reigned 1436–1502),[35] a devout Buddhist who had been a pupil of Bodong Panchen (*Bo-dong Pan-chen,* 1376–1451),[36] the founder of the Bodongpa school, who still holds the record for the greatest number of authored volumes in Tibetan. King Namgyal De's sister Adrol Chökyi Drönme *(A-grol Chos-kyi sGron-me)* became the first in the series of the famous Yamdrok Jetsunma *(Ya-'brog rje-btsun-ma)* incarnations within the Bodongpa tradition.[37]

King Namgyal De became a devotee and patron of Tsangnyön[38] and had printing blocks carved for a set of important texts, such as the Medical Tantra *(rGyud-bzhi)* and *The Mani Kambum (Maṇi bKa'-'bum)* and a text entitled *The Teachings of Milarepa (Mi-la'i bKa'-'bum).*[40] Tsangnyön had already, between 1488 and 1490, produced his first edition without royal patronage.[41] There appears to be no surviving copy of the King's edition.

King Namgyal De was the father of Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, who became Tsangnyön's principal pupil during his father's reign. Therefore, Tsangnyön had a close connection with both the Gungthang dynasty and the kingdom of Mangyul Gungthang.

Tsangnyön principally lived in locations where Milarepa had dwelt, but he also made pilgrimages to mount Kailash and to Nepal, where, accompanied by a young Lhatsun, he restored the Swayambhu stūpa (which Lhatsun himself would again restore in later years). Tsangnyön was honoured by King Ratna Malla (reigned 1482–1528) of Kathmandu and Patan (the third city of what is now called the Kathmandu valley, Bhaktapur, was reigned over by King Raya Malla (r. 1482–1505).

Tsangnyön died at the age of 55 while on his first visit to Rechungpuk *(Ras-chung-phug),* which was the cave in the Yarlung *(Yar-lung)* valley that had become associated with Rechungpa. This location of his demise would develop into a major centre for the future transmission of his lineage.

Milarepa in *The Treasury of Instructions*

What are the earliest literary sources for the legend of Milarepa as narrated by Tsangnyön? There appear to be some autobiographical verses within a text attributed to Milarepa that are included within Jamgon Kongtrul's nineteenth-century compendium of the teachings of the lineages of Tibet: *The Treasury of Instructions (gDams-ngag mDzod)*. Though this is a late collection, it appears to contain a number of ancient texts. The verses attributed to Milarepa do little to illuminate details of his life. There is only a description of his lineage and practice:

The succession of the lineage gurus:
From Māhācharya Tilopa
To Māhapandita Nāropa.
From him to Lhodrak Marpa.
I, the yogin from Gungthang,
With faith and devotion
To the Venerable Lhodrakpa,[42]
Sat at his feet for a long time.
With compassion he bestowed [the instructions] upon me.
I took up the instructions eagerly,
And through earnest practice I meditated intensely.
Through the blessing of the meditation,
The *caṇḍālī* blazed in my body.
Just a single cotton robe kept me warm.
The luminosity arose in my mind.[43]

Ngendzong Tönpa's *(Ngan-rdzong sTon-pa)* accounts of Milarepa

In the seventeenth chapter of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGur-mching dang bcas-pa)* there are five texts by Ngendzong Tönpa *(Ngan-rdzong sTon-pa),*[44] who was a pupil of Milarepa's through the last seventeen years of his life, which were most likely 1106 to 1123. At least three of these were co-authored with Shiwa O *(Zhi-ba 'Od),* another pupil of Milarepa. One of them is explicitly stated to be based upon Shiwa O's own visionary experiences, which he had repeated 'over and over again' and which was then written out with the authorisation of Milarepa. The extent of Milarepa's own contributions to the actual writing of these texts is unclear.

These five texts by Ngendzong have little biographical information, as they are solely concerned with Milarepa's encounter and exchange of songs with demons and local goddesses. However, a specific date is given for when Milarepa's visionary encounters were said to have occurred. These dates therefore seemed perfectly appropriate to contemporaries of Milarepa. The encounter with demons is said to have taken place in the summer of the water—dragon year of 1112 and that with the five Tseringma *(Tshe-ring-ma)* goddesses five years later, in the fire-bird year of 1117, when Milarepa was, if we accept 1040 as the year of his birth, respectively 72 and 77 years old.[45] They are reproduced, not only by Tsangnyön but also in the similarly extensive song compilation *The River of Blessings (Byin-rlabs kyi Chu-rgyun)*.[46]

Redactions of these chapters appear, without attribution to Ngendzong, in the early thirteenth-century Donmo Ripa *(Don-mo Ri-pa)* section of the fourteenth-century *The Great Kagyu Lives (bKa'-brgyud kyi rnam-thar chen-mo)*[47] and also in Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's *(Zhwa-dmar-pa mKha-spyod dBang-po)* (1350–1405) *Clouds of Blessings (Byin-brlabs kyi sPrin-phung)*.[48]

Tsangnyön Heruka not only reproduced these texts by Ngendzong Tönpa in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* but also added what he claimed to be another of Ngendzong's texts as the thirty-seventh chapter, in which Milarepa teaches Salé Ö (Sa-le-'od).[49] However, it contains only a little biographical information and features Rechungpa in a passage that is a later interpolation. Two similar versions of parts of this chapter had also appeared within the Shamarpa's *Clouds of Blessings* and in the anonymously compiled *A River of Blessings*.[50] In both, the Rechungpa passage is absent and the female practitioner is named Sal-lé Drön *(gSal-le sGron)* instead of Sal-lé Ö *(gSal-le 'Od)*. A comparative analysis of these songs has been done by Kristin Blanke and may appear in the later two volumes of the new translation into Italian of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* that she is co-translating.[51]

Gampopa's *The Lives of Marpa and Milarepa (rJe Mar-pa dang rJe-btsun Mi-la'i rNam-thar)*

The earlier part of Rechungpa's life often features prominently in the biographies of Milarepa. Unfortunately, no biographies by Rechungpa's contemporaries, such as *The Essence of the Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po)* have yet come to light in their original form. However, we do have two biographies of Milarepa that were composed by contemporaries of Rechungpa: Gampopa and Lama Shang. Unfortunately, they do not mention Rechungpa. Nevertheless, by comparing their versions of the life of Milarepa with later versions, we can gain an idea of how much narrative transformation has taken place before the earliest surviving biography of Rechungpa.

The earliest extant Kagyu biographies are two short texts by Gampopa (1079–1153). They were written *circa* 1145–53. These biographies by Gampopa are, in hindsight, an embryonic form of the later Kagyu lineage histories, which are generally called *Kagyu Sertreng (bKa'-brgyud gSer-'phreng),* which means 'the Golden Garland of the Kagyu'.

That these are the earliest Kagyupa historical material is consistent with Gampopa's being responsible for the first substantial literary corpus of the Kagyupa, which reflects his own earlier Kadampa *(bKa'-gdams-pa)* training and that tradition's emphasis on scholarship. The texts are:

1 *The Lives of Tilopa and Nāropa (Tailo*[52] *dang Nāro'i rnam-thar).*[53]
2 *The Lives of Marpa and Milarepa (rJe Mar-pa dang rJe-btsun Mi-la'i rNam-thar).*[54]

The Lives of Tilopa and Naropa is a text authored by Gampopa himself, written in the same precise literary style as found in his major work *The Precious Adornments of Liberation (Thar-pa rin-po-che'i rgyan)*.[55]

The Lives of Marpa and Milarepa is a *zintri (zin-bris)*—a pupil's record of what may have been a single oral lecture by Gampopa. Many of his teachings are preserved in this form in *The Collected Works of Gampopa*. Unfortunately, in this case the pupil has not provided his name.

The latter text serves as an addendum to the former, perhaps a spoken lecture following on from a reading of the text. Apart from the textual division created by the title and format, *The Lives of Marpa and Milarepa* begins as a continuation of *The Lives of Tilopa and Naropa,* the first line being 'His pupil was…' without explaining whom is being referred to by 'his'. Its literary style, in contrast with the previous text, is somewhat ungainly and occasionally obscure.

In this earliest biography of Milarepa, key narrative details differ considerably from later versions such as Tsangnyön's, where more dramatic alternatives have replaced these comparatively mundane events.

Milarepa's father does *not* die while he is young, and his mother is never mentioned. It is said that there is only the father and son, so *she* appears to have died while he was a child. When Milarepa returns home, it is therefore to see his father, and he discovers that he has died in the meantime.[56] The word for sister and female cousin is identical in Tibetan, and there is a point in the narrative when a paternal aunt and a female cousin

visit him. The latter is presumably the seed for the later narrative of the sister. There is no mention of enmity between Milarepa and his aunt. On the contrary, she solely concerned for his welfare.

Though he becomes a sorcerer, there is no mention of any use he made of this in his early years, and at no point is it inferred that his training was a bad thing. Marpa does *not* refuse to give Milarepa teachings,[57] but as Milarepa has no money to pay for them he does household tasks, such as carrying water in exchange for the instruction. He is *not* said to erect or demolish buildings.[58]

When Marpa has finished teaching Milarepa he sends him to Ngoktön for more detailed teaching. Milarepa therefore does *not* escape with Damema's aid so as to secretly study under Ngoktön.[59]

When Milarepa is snowed in on Lachi *(La-phyi)* Mountain, Milarepa mistakes the calls of the search party for the cries of animals. He eventually makes a smoke signal to attract their attention. He does *not,* as in Tsangnyön, transform into a snow leopard that leads the search party to his cave.[60]

Nothing remarkable is mentioned about his death or cremation, but Gampopa states, in every edition, and this is a point that will be repeated more specifically by Lama Shang and Donmo Ripa, that Milarepa was 'an individual who was an emanation' *(sprul pa'i gang zag)*.[61] Whereas Gampopa had said of Marpa only that he 'was like an emanation'. This, we shall see was the generally held view concerning Milarepa until Tsangnyön, and has even continued afterwards in some cases.

There are also passages in the narrative where Milarepa is shown to be in error or to have limitations. These details are gradually omitted in successive later versions and are not found at all in Tsangnyön:

1 He mistakes candlelight for meditative illumination. On his first meditation retreat, he has a lamp upon his head to keep him straight. He opens his eyes and on seeing the room illuminated, thinks, 'I'm having my first meditation experience!' before realising the light is coming from the butter lamp on his head![62]
2 He is unaware of how thin he has become. He is shocked when it is pointed out to him by his aunt and cousin.[63]
3 He mistakes the cries of the search party for those of animals.[64]
4 He has breathing difficulties, which he believes is because of breaking a promise made to patrons.[65]
5 Miraculous manifestations, as for example, someone perceiving Milarepa as a white stūpa, are described as taking place within the minds of those who perceive them, with Milarepa himself being unaware of his pupils' experiences.[66]
6 Milarepa denies to Gampopa the truth of a rumour that he once flew ahead of some pupils in the middle of a thick blizzard. Instead he ran, leaving very little mark on the snow.[67]

This first generation account of Milarepa's life indicates that confusion and rumour were already current even during his lifetime. Gampopa describes having to find out from Milarepa himself the truth behind rumours that he has heard.

Similarly, in the biography of Marpa, Gampopa records that while crossing a lake in the Tibetan region of Nub, he lost the texts he had collected in India. He notes there exists an alternative account, according to which a jealous rival translator had thrown the

texts into the water. This version is modified by the non-honorific verb *zer,* as opposed to Gampopa's own statements, which are qualified by the honorific verb *gsung*.[68] However, it is the latter more dramatic version that subsequently gained precedence in Marpa hagiographies, developing into an elaborate episode complete with songs, which has remained popular in spite of being vigorously condemned by Tibetan historians such as Tāranātha (1575–1634) and Belo Tsewang Kunkhyab *('Be-lo Tshe-dbang Kun-khyab)* (eighteenth century).[69]

It could be argued that the absence of such narrative details as Milarepa's tower building does not constitute a denial of them, particularly as the text states that there was much more to be related concerning Milarepa's time with Marpa. However, the very absence of the tower building is significant, not only because it would have served as the most striking detail in the narrative, but also because the tower (which is now known as 'Mila's tower') is specifically mentioned by Gampopa as part of Marpa's legacy for the future, but without associating Milarepa with it. The theme of purification, through suffering, of the bad karma accrued by his practice of sorcery is also absent, even though Milarepa is called a great sorcerer *(mthu-chen),* and causes hailstorms to punish the enemies of Ngoktön.

There is no indication in these passages that these acts of sorcery were bad actions. In the later versions, sorcery takes on a sometimes ambiguous and inconsistent role in the narratives. As we have seen, even Tsangnyön relates that Milarepa initially used sorcery in his service for Marpa, causing the deaths of certain individuals. The lives of other early masters, such as Marpa himself, Ra Lotsawa (Rwa Lo-tsā-ba) (eleventh-twelfth century), Lama Shang *(Bla-ma Zhang)* (1123–93) and the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa *(Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa)* (1110–93), contain incidents of the successful practice of sorcery that, even though they caused the deaths of others, are not portrayed as accruing bad karma. In the latter two lamas, who are a few generations later, the sorcery is only earlier in their career, however, and the first Karmapa's sorcery was while he was between his tenth and fifteenth year.[70]

The Blue Annals, in its account of how Tsurtön Wang-ngé *('Thsur-ston dBang-nge),* became one of the four principal pupils of Marpa, states that Marpa told Tsurtön he would receive the instructions only after causing the death of a Marpa Mönnak *(Mar-pa Mon-nag),* a cousin of Marpa's. Tsurtön practiced sorcery for a month in seclusion and then told Marpa that his practice had been effective and would take place at a certain date. Marpa then told his cousin that he would die on that day. The cousin refused to believe him, but when that day came, as he remembered Marpa's words, a piece of the roof of his house fell onto his head, killing him instantly. Tsurtön was then rewarded by becoming Marpa's pupil.[71] This kind of anecdote is not uncommon in biographies dating to the early centuries of the second millennium. For example, Burgom *(Bur-sgom),* who was one of Rechungpa's pupils, had his own pupil Mogchokpa *(rMog-cog-pa)* kill people with a hailstorm before giving him teachings.[72] In all these cases, the premise is that the victims were harmful to the Dharma and thus stopping their activities was beneficial even to the victims. Sorcery is infact taught unabashedly in Indian Tantra texts, even though they are usually elided in the Tibetan practice texts that are based upon them.

Tilopa, the principal source of the Kagyu Lineage, in his song *The Inconceivable Activity of Slaying*[73] states:

The unborn vajra wisdom
Has a nature of sharpness and piercing,
Through slaying and through wrathful activity,
All of the malevolent are pacified.
The yogin who is loving and skilled
Engages as much as he can in the activity of slaying.

Later tradition attempts to present such passages as purely symbolic, and many of Tilopa's songs were put into a biographical context that does not perfectly match their content. For example, the above song is presented as a song to a butcher, converting him from the practice of killing animals to killing ignorance instead.

We find an explicit example of the defence of sorcery in the biography of one of its great practitioners, who was a contemporary of Rechungpa and appears in his biographies. Ra Lotsawa was a master of the Yamāntaka practice, which is particularly associated with lethal sorcery. In some biographies, Milarepa's sorcery is said to have been Yamāntaka. Ra's biography lists a number of other lamas and lotsawas that he slew, including Marpa's own son. Shortly after slaying a number of people with a twirl of his phurba, he is implored by Ngok Dodé (rNgog mDo-sde) the son of Marpa's pupil Ngoktön, not to harm beings, as it will give him a bad reputation. In reply, Ra Lotsawa sings:

This slaying activity of mine,
In terms of benefit for oneself or benefit for others,
Is for the benefit of others.
It is to benefit beings that are difficult to teach…
It is said in the Guhyasamāja
'If through this kind of secret vajra
One slays all beings
One will be reborn as a bodhisattva
In the realm of Buddha Akśobhya.'
This is what Vajradhara taught.

There are, nevertheless, many instances of biographical texts and histories that warn against the use of sorcery and the ill effects that can come from its practice. It has an ambivalent position in Tibetan culture, and hence the lack of consistency in its portrayal in the Milarepa and Rechungpa biographies. It did not become completely marginalised

in modern Tibetan Buddhism. For example, there was a major rite of sorcery named 'The four continents of thread-crosses of the Tsen deities' *(bTsan-mdos Gling-bzhi)* that was performed at the behest of the Lhasa government when it was thought the state was in danger. It involved a number of macabre ingredients such as the fresh blood of a young man killed in a fight and the vagina of a prostitute. The head of the Mindroling monastery, the principal Nyingma monastery in central Tibet performed this during the reign of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. An earthquake in Nepal and the death of the Nepalese general whose effigy had been used in the rite were attributed to this practice, and these events forestalled an apparently planned invasion. It was also performed in 1950 against the Chinese, but without any discernible effect.[74]

The early date of the Gampopa text is characterised by its inclusion of a short account of Ngoktön, also known as Lama Ngok *(Bla-ma rNgog)* (1036–1102), and the listing of him as Milarepa's teacher in addition to Marpa. This will be de-emphasised in later histories, and though Tsangnyön retains the account of Ngoktön's teaching Milarepa, it is transformed into an aberration, thus presenting a clearer direct succession from Marpa to Milarepa.

Lama Shang's *(Bla-ma Zhang) The Life of Milarepa (Mi-la-ras-pa'i rnam-thar)*

Lama Shang's *The Life of Milarepa* appears in his seminal *Deeds and Lives (mDzad-pa rnam-thar gyi skor),*[75] Lama Shang is also known by the name Yudrapa Tsöndru Drakpa Shang *(gYu-bra-pa brTson-'grus Grags-pa)*. Lama Shang (1123–93) was the founder of the Tsalpa Kagyu *(Tshal-pa bKa'-brgyud)* tradition, which has now ceased to have an independent existence. He was a pupil of Gampopa's nephew and heir: Gomtsul *(sGom-tshul)* a.k.a Tsultrim Nyingpo *(Tshul-khrims sNying-po)* (1116–69). He met Gomtsul in 1157, when in his mid-thirties. He had already mastered *caṇḍāli* under a teacher from the lineage of Drigom Repa *('Bri-sgom Ras-pa)* a pupil of Milarepa. Lama Shang wrote these early Kagyu biographies circa 1160–93.

This work does not have the standard form of the later *Sertreng (gSer-'phreng)* literature, in which each biography forms a chapter in a single text. Instead, this has the form of a collection of biographies, each with its own title and colophon. Unlike the two Gampopa texts, however, it deals with each subject separately, so that in hindsight it demonstrates a further stage in the textual evolution of the *Sertreng* literature.

The lineage that had been described by Gampopa is here augmented by biographies of two successors between Milarepa and Lama Shang: Gampopa himself and Gomtsul. In addition, Lama Shang also includes biographies of four of his other teachers.

In the lifetime of Lama Shang, the hereditary Kagyu lineage of Ngoktön was distinct from Gampopa's lineage and therefore in this work, as in future *Sertreng* texts, Ngoktön is not given the emphasis of meriting his own, however brief, biography. The text, however, includes the life-stories of Lama Shang's other teachers, which in their turn will not reappear in future lineage histories. Here, they serve the purpose of demonstrating that Lama Shang was the repository of various transmissions, which formed the identity of his Tsalpa Kagyu tradition.

Lama Shang based his biographies of Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa and Milarepa upon the Gampopa texts. Lama Shang inserted brief passages, omitted others, and summarized and modulated. He greatly expanded the Tilopa section, and altered the sequence of the twelve hardships that Nāropa undergoes under Tilopa. Also, one of Nāropa's twelve hardships as found in Gampopa is omitted and replaced by an alternative version of one of the other hardships.

Examples of the way in which the Gampopa text was reused with minor alterations are provided here from the opening of Lama Shang's *The Life of Milarepa*. It is representative of how biographical material is adapted by Tibetan authors. Omitted words are designated by being struck through and the additions (by Lama Shang) are underlined.[76]

> The [spiritual] son of both Mar-pa and Ngok was the venerable Milarepa. He was from ~~His~~ Gungthang and his ~~family~~ name was Mi-la ~~and his name was~~ Thöpa Gawa. There was only himself and his father, and as they were of inferior status ~~matters were desperate,~~ he went to U to seek [the practice of] sorcery. ~~He learned many practices of sorcery and returned [home]~~ Then in Rong ~~in Tsang~~ he received a Dharma teaching from ~~one named~~ Bhe-tön ~~pa~~ Lhaga…
>
> He went to venerable Marpa ~~and said to him, 'I have no provisions. I request both Dharma and my keep from you.'~~
>
> ~~[Marpa] said, 'You can't have both. Which do you want?'~~
>
> ~~[Milarepa] replied, 'I want the Dharma'.~~
>
> ~~[Marpa] said, 'Then do such tasks as fetching water'. [Marpa] then gave him the name 'Tuchen' (Great Sorcerer).~~ and ~~the next morning~~ from that day [Milarepa] was accepted as an attendant. ~~[Gampopa]~~ [It's] taught that there are many such stories concerning that [time].
>
> [Milarepa] was a pupil under Lama Marpa for five years, and received from him the instructions ~~of the practice lineage.~~ Then he was a pupil of Ngok's for one year.

Transliteration

> ~~Do~~ Mar rngog gnyis kyi sras rje btsun bla ma mi la ~~ras pa yin te~~ lags/ yul gung thang gi ~~gdung rus~~ mi la ~~/ mtshan~~ thos pa dga' bya ba yin/yab sras gnyis las med ~~pas shin tu khas nyen te /~~ pa la/kha dman pa yin pas dbus su mthu ji ltar tshol du ~~phyin pas~~ byon pa dang/ ~~mthu mang po brlabs nas yar log / de nas gtsang~~ rong du bhe ston pa lha dga' ~~bya ba~~ la chos cig gsan ~~pas~~ pa dang/…

~~Bla ma~~rje btsun mar-pa'i ~~drung du~~spyan sngar byon ~~nas~~pa dang/~~nga~~ ~~la rgyags kyang med chos dang zang zing gnyis ka zhu byas pas / gnyis ka mi 'ong gang 'dod gsungs pas / chos 'dod byas pas 'o na chu len pa la sogs pa gyis gsung / de nas ming mthu chen bya bar btags so~~ /de'i ~~nang par~~nyin mo rang nas nye ~~gnas su chud / de'i~~byas pa'i lo rgyus mang du ~~yang yod~~gsung/

~~Der~~bla ma mar pa lo lnga brten[77] nas~~/ sgrub rgyud kyi~~ gdam ngag ~~rnams~~zhus/~~de nas~~ rngog lo gcig brten ~~nas~~/

One can see here that Lama Shang glosses *shin tu khas nyen* as *kha dman pa,* and therefore does not see it as a positive quality, contrary to Khenpo Konchok Gyaltsen's translation of this phrase as it appears in Donmo Ripa's text which was also based on the Gampopa text.

The preceding phrase 'there was only the father and son' *(yab sras gnyis las med)* has its corollary in Gyadangpa *(rGya-ldang-pa),* where the fact that Milarepa's family line only produces one son gives it an inferior status. The phrase 'father and son' *yab-sras gnyis* cannot refer here to Milarepa and his teachers Marpa and Ngok, even though the term 'father' *(yab)* is used for them, as they are referred to as 'two fathers', and both are renowned as having more than one lineage successor. The context of *yab-sras gnyis las med-pa* also does not favour such an interpretation, for this sentence is providing the reason why Milarepa was driven to learn sorcery.

Lama Shang omits not only Gampopa's short life of Ngok and the description of his studying under Marpa, but also a description of Milarepa's stay with him, merely stating that Milarepa stayed with him for one year. It is a minor variation, as the account of Ngok was already brief, but if Lama Shang had been writing as a holder of the Ngok lineage, the references to him would obviously have been expanded, not diminished.

This agenda is made explicit when Lama Shang, in his biography of Gampopa, is critical of Kagyu lineages that were not transmitted through Gampopa.[78]

Lama Shang omits three of Gampopa's six incidents that reveal flaws or limitations in Milarepa:

1 Mistaking the butter-lamp light for meditative illumination.
2 Mistaking the calls of the search party for the cries of animals.
3 Being unaware of the miraculous manifestations that others perceive on seeing him.

There are only two additions to Gampopa's narrative. In other words, they appear to be the only additional material available to Lama Shang, even though he was a central and active literary figure in the Kagyu tradition during the decades after Gampopa's death:

1 Milarepa shows his genitals to his aunt and female cousin, who are scandalised.
2 He arranges for a group of girls to masturbate him, but this only causes his penis to shrink until it vanishes into his body.

It is possible these anecdotes had currency during Gampopa's time, but that he withheld them out of a sense of decorum. Lama Shang makes it explicit that it was Milarepa's own idea to cause a hailstorm to attack Lama Ngok's enemies and he was not forced to do so,

as he had already received the instructions from Marpa and was in the process of receiving the teaching in more detail from Ngok. No bad karma is associated with this activity.

What is surprising is that Lama Shang, a prolific biographer with access to other lineages had obtained so little information to add to what is to be found in Gampopa's text. Lama Shang's portrayal gives a clear indication of how Milarepa was remembered within the Dakpo Kagyu in the late twelfth century.

Donmo Ripa (thirteenth century)

Donmo Ripa (or Ritrö Wangchuk) based his early-thirteenth-century version (see Chapter 2) on the Gampopa text and not on the version by Lama Shang, making more additions than the latter had. Milarepa's family still consists of himself and his father, and the details of his sorcery training are absent. While he is working for Marpa, the narrative element of building appears. It is said Marpa gave him a teaching for each large stone that he carried with his considerable strength.[79] But the narrative theme of purification, through physical suffering, of the karmic result of sorcery is still absent. Marpa even stops him from doing further physical labour when he sees how well he practices. Milarepa uses his sorcery to punish Ngoktön's enemies from his own volition, without any instruction from anyone else.[80] While most of the text is faithful to Gampopa, one singular change, which was to appear in Tsangnyön's version, is that when Milarepa was snowed in upon Lachi mountain, the search party first see a snow leopard and follow its tracks, which transform into human footprints that lead to Milarepa, implying that he had been the snow leopard.[81]

Donmo Ripa's text also contains the earliest surviving account of Rechungpa, which we shall examine in later chapters.

Gyadangpa (thirteenth century)

The earliest known appearance of the ingredients of Tsangnyön's version of Milarepa's life—the early death of the father, the important role of his mother and sister, his gaining revenge through killing many people with sorcery, and the building and demolishing of houses in an attempt to receive teachings from Marpa—first appear in the mid-thirteenth-century works of Gyadangpa.[82] The mistreatment of the family is not attributed specifically to a wicked uncle and aunt, but just a general group of relatives and neighbours. However, a house does collapse during the wedding of the son of a particularly malevolent uncle named Yugyal *(g.Yu-rgyal),* killing twenty-five people. The survivors are then possessed by demons that declare to everyone that they were sent by Mila Thöpa Gawa, and then the survivors all die, leaving only one old lady from amongst the families of Milarepa's enemies still living.[83]

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels, is a rather awkward summary of roughly the same material as found in Gyadangpa, as they were probably both based on the same source. The passage on the possession and death of the survivors has been summarized to

a point where the narrative is no longer clear, but the text has some details that are absent in Gyadangpa. The old lady who is the sole survivor is specified to be an old paternal aunt,[84] which is an important ingredient in the development of the Milrepa story. Also, it is said that the villagers hold a secret meeting and decide to send someone to murder Milarepa. The wife of the principal conspirator, who had previously been a servant to Milarepa's family, hears him talk about their plans in his sleep and she informs Milarepa's mother of the danger, which explains her asking Milarepa not to return home, but to cause a hailstorm to punish the village.[85]

It is noteworthy that Gyadangpa, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje, The Blue Annals,* Möntsepa and other texts spell the Mila part of Milarepa's family name as *Mid-la,* and not *Mi-la,* which can be phonologically very similar. *Mid-la* appears to be the older spelling, though it does not correspond with the fanciful origin for the name *Mi-la* that was given by Tsangnyön, who says it means 'Oh man!' as the cry of a demon defeated by the founder of the family-line.[86]

Gyadangpa is more specific concerning Milarepa as an emanation:

> This king of the venerable ones, named Milarepa, was generally nothing other than a buddha emanation who came in an ordinary form in this time of the five kinds of degeneracy.[87]

Gyadangpa, in particular describes the following conversation that contrasts markedly with Tsangnyön's later version of the same passage:

> The venerable one asked Lama Rechungpa and Shiwa-ö, 'Who do you think I am?' Shiwa-ö answered, 'In my perception, I think you are a buddha.' The guru answered, 'You say this out of devotion, but I am the emanated rebirth of master Nāgārjunagarbha who was an emanation of the Buddha himself as prophesied by the Buddha.' Therefore he truly was Nāgārjunagarbha, the emanation of the Buddha.[88]

Nāgārjunagarbha seems a relatively obscure figure to be identified with, unless he was identified with Nāgārjuna. There are four texts in the canon by a Nāgārjunagarbha, one of which was translated by Ma Lotsawa (1044–89). This text is *Understanding the Four Seals* (Sanskrit: *Caturmudrā-niścaya;* Tibetan: *Phyag-rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*), a short text of just two folios. However this identification of Milarepa will be eclipsed by the later *terma* version of his being an emanation of Mañjuśrīmitra, a principal figure in the Nyingma tradition.

Gyadangpa's version of Milarepa's life, when compared to earlier works, contains some additional material that will be central for Tsangnyön Heruka's fifteenth-century version of Milarepa's life story:

1 Milarepa's father dies early, and his mother features strongly in his life.
2 The troubles experienced by Mi-la's family are specified to be caused by relatives and neighbours.
3 Milarepa, on his mother's urging, attacks the relatives and neighbours with sorcery, and every one of them dies.

4 When Milarepa meets Marpa, Marpa refuses at first to give him the teachings. In order to receive them, Milarepa has first to practise sorcery against Marpa's enemies and then single-handedly erect and demolish a succession of buildings. But he is still refused the teachings.
5 On Marpa's wife's suggestion, and having requested permission from Marpa, Milarepa goes to study with Ngoktön for a year. On his return to Marpa, Marpa is very pleased that Ngoktön has given him all the instruction, even though Milarepa has made no spiritual progress.

The Gampopa/Lama Shang/Donmo Ripa version was to be eclipsed by narrative traditions that continue the dramatic ingredients found in Gyadangpa. Though as yet the visit to Ngoktön has not developed into a secret escape.

Gyadangpa does not reproduce textual material from Gampopa and Lama Shang; but employs details that place the biography in a distinct line of narrative transmission, which also produced *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

There is one textual coincidence between Gyadangpa and Gampopa/Lama Shang. In the opening passage of Gampopa/Lama Shang's life of Mila there is the line: 'There were only the father and son.'[89] This phrase recurs in Gyadangpa within the context of a long description of the low quality of the ancestry of Milarepa's father, in which each family had but one son. This may be an indication of a remote common ancestry, but is more probably merely a textual coincidence as the result of the use of a stock phrase.

Though Gampopa, Lama Shang and Donmo Ripa made references to songs, and quoted a few lines, Gyadangpa is the first to provide us with entire songs by Milarepa and Rechungpa, and so is particularly relevant in tracing the history of the development of these songs.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje

The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje is of the same branch of narrative tradition as Gyadangpa, for it shares with it the same principal differences from the Gampopa and Lama Shang texts. The earliest part of Milarepa's life is very brief in *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje,* but it has details not found in Gyadangpa, which were to be influential on Tsangnyön Heruka: a paternal uncle is responsible for Milarepa's miseries; an aunt survives Milarepa's sorcery; Marpa does not know that Milarepa has gone to Ngoktön, because his wife had made him drunk with strong beer, so that Milarepa could escape.

The Gampopa/Lama Shang version of Milarepa being snowed in at Lachi *(La-phyi)* Mountain has Milarepa mistaking the cries of a search party for animals. In Gyadangpa he does not make that mistake, and as they cannot reach him because of the snow, he flies down to them, and then, carrying the search party, flies further down the mountain. In *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje,* the miraculous powers are even more dramatic, but interestingly had already appeared in the Donmo Ripa version: Milarepa transforms into a snow leopard that watches the search party as they look for him. They follow the leopard tracks, which turn into human footprints that lead to Milarepa's cave.

These few examples reveal that Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* are independent variants of the same narrative tradition. Although the

story-lines are parallel, *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje's* narrative has on the whole evolved further from the Gampopa/Lama Shang narrative base than Gyadangpa has, though unlike that text, it retained in that episode the narrative unit of mis-identification as an animal.

The number of songs in *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* is far greater than in Gyadangpa. The same episode has a few songs of a similar nature rather than just one, while narrative passages without songs in Gyadangpa gain them here, however unlikely it may be that individuals would break into song.

There are songs that are in both texts, though with expansion and variation in *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje*. For example, when Milarepa discovers his family home in ruins:

Gyadangpa (rGya-ldang-pa), 219:

I pay homage to the lord gurus.
Alas! Alas! There is no essence.
Generally, saṃsāra has no essence.
Always, always, without essence.
Changing, changing without essence.

rJe bla ma rnams la phyag 'tshal lo/
Kye ma kye ma snying po med/
sPyir 'khor ba'i chos la snying po med/
rTags [*sic*=rtag] shing rtags *[sic]* shing snying po med/
'Gyur gyin 'gyur gyin snying po med/

The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje has a more polished, literary form:
(*bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* 16a5)

Alas!
The phenomena of saṃsāra have no essence
Impermanent, impermanent, without essence
Changing, changing, without essence
Uncertain, uncertain without essence.

Kye ma
'Khor ba'i chos la snying po med/
Mi rtag mi rtag snying po med/
'Gyur zhing 'gyur zhing snying po med/

Mi nges mi nges snying po med/

Gyadangpa's next two lines, which are grounded in the narrative, are:

Though there are land, mother and sister,
[Though there are] all three, there is no essence.
Yul dang ma dang sring mo gsum/
gSum kar yod kyang snying po med/

This is expanded in *The Life and Songs of Glorious Shepay Dorje* into four almost identical verses, ringing the changes on the subject of land and master, father and son, father and mother, and man and wealth, which are examples of a much smoother literary composition, though slightly distanced from its narrative context. The first of these is:

If there is land and no owner, there is no essence
If there is an owner but no land, there is no essence
Though owner and land come together, there is no essence,
The phenomena of saṃsāra have no essence.

Yul yod bdag med snying po med/
bDag yod yul med snying po med/
bDag dang yul gnyis 'dzom yang snying po med/
'Khor ba'i chos la snying po med/

Milarepa as an emanation

We have seen that Milarepa is portrayed as an emanation by all our earliest authors. Donmo Ripa rewords the passage in Gampopa and Lama Shang in a more specific form:

> He was a *nirmāṇakāya (tulku)* [who] saw and made manifest the final truth of the *dharmatā*.[90]

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (bKa'-brgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi 'Phreng-ba), which could be as early as the thirteenth century, is closely related to Gyadangpa. However, the presentation of Milarepa's emanation status differs in its details to a degree

that makes it seem as if Milarepa was *never* an ordinary being, as he was fundamentally an emanation from the primordial Buddha Vajradhara.

> Vajradhara emanated as Vairocana. Vairocana emanated as Mañjuśrī. Then he emanated as a symbol of the necessity for diligence in practice.[91]

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (circa fourteenth century), was the principal collection of songs before Tsangnyön Heruka's *Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. However, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* makes a specific statement concerning Milarepa's emanation status, which was to prove widespread and lasting. It states that Milarepa was 'an emanation of the great being of India, Mañjuśrīmitra'. Mañjuśrīmitra is a figure of great importance in the Nyingma Dzogchen lineage. We find this same identification given by the second Shamarpa (1350–1405) and many centuries later it is still the view of the great Kagyu encyclopaedist and lineage holder Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayé (*'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros mTha'-yas,* 1813–98), who says:

> Ultimately, having attained enlightenment in the maṇḍala of Guhyasamāja through the five *abhisaṃbhodis*,[92] he benefited infinite beings through measureless manifestations of emanations such as Master Mañjuśrīmitra in India, and so on.[93]

We also find this identification, in defiance of the Tsangnyön version of Milarepa as an ordinary being, in the history of Drakar Taso monastery. This is a place particularly sacred to Milarepa, and its abbot authored this text in 1828. In it he states that Mañjuśrī, the embodiment of the wisdom of all the Buddhas, took birth in 'the five peaked mountain' (Wu-tai Shan) in China and then manifested many emanations. Amongst them, the most famous include King Yashas in Shambhala, (the first of the Kalkin *(rigs-ldan)* dynasty, which is said to maintain the Kālacakra teachings in this mythical kingdom); the great master Mañjuśrīmitra in Śrī Laṅka; Nāgārjuna in southern India; and King Amsuvarman in Nepal (who reigned from around 605 to 641, and whose daughter, Princess Bhrikuti, married Tibet's first Buddhist King Songtsen Gampo). In Tibet, Mañjuśrī emanated as its two most famous Buddhist Kings: Trisong Deutsen and Ralpachen; as Milarepa's contemporary Ra Lotsawa Dorje Drak *(Rwa rDo-rje Grags),* the master of sorcery who will also feature in the biographies of Rechungpa; as Sakya Pandita, (1182–1251), who was the greatest scholar in the history of the Sakya lineage; and as Tsongkhapa (*Tsong-kha-pa,* 1357–1419), the founder of the Gelukpa tradition. Trinlay Gyamtso *(Phrin-las rGya-mtsho)* the abbot of Drakar Taso, then adds that

> Supreme amongst them all is that emanation of Mahācharya Mañjuśrīmitra—the great venerable one, Mila.

He then kindly gives us the source for this identification and why it is Mañjuśrīmitra from amongst all these figures that is emphasised as his previous life. He says that in the terma text *The Questions and Answer at Khari [mountain] (mKha'-ri'i Zhus-lan),* Padmākara prophecies to King Trisong Deutsen that the Indian siddha Kṛṣṇapa will

emanate as Dromi Lotsawa, Dombhi Heruka will emanate as Marpa Lotsawa, and Mañjuśrīmitra, will emanate as Milarepa.

This prophecy appears in later termas too, such as in the Avalokiteśvara volume of Letro Lingpa, *(Las-phro Gling-pa)* who is better known under the name Rigdzin Jatsön Nyingpo *(Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-thson sNying-po)* (1585–1656), who had close ties with the Kagyu lineage and even discovered the guru yoga of Gampopa that is practiced within the Kagyu. His *Mahākaruṇika: Spontaneous Liberation from the Lower Existences (Thugs-rje Chen-po Ngan-song Rang-grol),* contains a prophecy named Mirror of White Silver *(dNgul-kar Me-long),* in which the Dzogchen lineage is emphasised through Marpa being the emanation of Śrī Siṅgha, who was Mañjuśrīmitra's successor in the Dzogchen lineage.

Trinlay Gyamtso also quotes from a terma of Ngari Tertön Dawa Gyaltsen *(mNga'-ris gTer-ston Zla-ba rGyal-mtshan),* better known as Garwang Dorje *(Gar-dbang rDo-rje)* (1640–85). The terma, entitled *Vajrasattva: The Mirror of the Mind (rDor-sems Thugs kyi Me-long),* contains a prophecy entitled *Illuminating the Three Existences (Srid gsum gsal byed),* in which, while *Milarepa* is still an emanation of Mañjuśrīmitra, Marpa is an emanation of the Kagyu lineage's principal deity: Cakrasamvara.[94]

While these representations of Milarepa as an emanation will probably shock many present-day Kagyu adherents, there is a quite different portrayal of Milarepa in the lineage history by the Drukpa Kagyu school's greatest author, Pema Karpo (*Pad-ma dKar-po,* 1527–92) that many will find surprising for quite another reason. According to Pema Karpo, not only was Milarepa born an ordinary being, but he also did *not* achieve buddhahood during his lifetime. He says that at the time he was snowed in on Lachi mountain, he attained the sixth *bhūmi,* or stage of enlightenment. He does not meet Rechungpa until after this time. Pema Karpo deduces that when Milarepa manifests a series of miracles to Rechungpa (a passage that will be examined in detail in a later chapter), he had loosened the knot in his forehead cakra and had therefore reached the tenth *bhūmi*. Milarepa is portrayed as stating that at the end of his life he had reached the twelfth *bhūmi,* but still had the last part of the path to follow, and therefore was going to take birth in the eastern buddha realm of Abhirati, where he would eventually achieve buddhahood.[95]

In the nineteenth century, Trinlay Gyamtso, in his *A History of Drakar Taso,*[96] says that Milarepa reached the sixth *bhūmi* when snowed in at Lachi mountain, reached the eighth *bhūmi* when he subjugated the Tseringma *(Tshe-ring-ma)* goddesses, and the tenth *bhūmi* when manifesting miracles to Rechungpa.

This representation of the level of Milarepa's enlightenment could very well be a response to criticism from some quarters that the Kagyu claim to the achievement of buddhahood in one lifetime was false because these masters did not develop the thirty-two major and eighty minor physical signs of a buddha. However, the general present-day explanation for this apparent anomaly is that Milarepa and other masters reached buddhahood so quickly through the vajrayāna path that the appearance of the external physical signs of buddhahood could not appear until after death.

Passage of time within Milarepa's life

In Tsangnyön's version it seems as if little time passes between Milarepa's departure from his teacher of sorcery and his meeting with Marpa. He becomes a pupil of only one other master in-between. This gives the impression of Milarepa being young when with Marpa, which enhances the poignancy of the narrative. However, this is contradicted in the sixteenth chapter of *The Hundred Thousand Songs* itself, where Milarepa lists ten teachers that he studied with before going to Marpa, with Rongtön Lhaga *(Rong-ston lHa-dga')* being only the last of the ten. This in itself reduces the number as given in the earlier version of the song in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* where they are said to be 100! *The Blue Annals* specifies that Milarepa was in his thirty-eighth year when he came to Marpa and left him in his forty-fifth year (a period of time which may correspond with 1078 to 1084).[97] Pema Karpo believed that Milarepa went to study sorcery in his eighteenth year and afterwards studied with nine teachers, one or two years with each, over a period of fifteen years before he met Marpa. For example, Milarepa studies under a teacher named Nub *(sNub)* in Tsang, and then receives from Gyertön Wang-ngé *(sGyer-ston dBang-nge)* his entire Dzogchen teachings. Then from Changchub Gyalpo *(Byang-chub rGyal-po)* he received Nyingma yidam deity practices such as Gyutrul Drawa *(sGyu-'phrul Drwa-ba)* Yangdak *(Yang-dag)* and Dutsi Yonten *(bDud-rtsi Yon-tan)*. He then studied another of the eight principal Nyingma deity practices—Mamo Bötong *(Ma-mo rBod-gtong)*—under another Marpa, a Marpa Wang-ngé *(Mar-pa dBang-nge)*.[98] *A History of Drakar Taso* follows Pema Karpo's version fairly closely, with a fifteen-year period of studying with ten lamas, although it has Milarepa already in his twenty-third year before he leaves home for central Tibet.[99] It relates that he went to see Marpa because although he had mastered the 'generation phase' practice, he was still unsatisfied. All these texts say that his nine years of solitary retreat ended in his fifty-fifth year (which could be 1093), one year after Marpa's death, however the dates of Milarepa, and even more so of Marpa, are problematic.

The Dates of Milarepa

Ngendzong Tönpa, writing during Milarepa's lifetime, describes Milarepa's encounter with demons as having taken place in the water-dragon year of 1112 and his encounter with the Tseringma goddesses as taking place in the summer of the fire-bird year of 1117.[100]

Neither Gampopa nor Lama Shang provide life-span or dates for Milarepa. The only time frame that Gampopa provides is his statement that he remained with Milarepa for thirteen months. According to Lama Shang, Gampopa was in his thirty-second year when he met Milarepa. Although Lama Shang does not provide dates for Gampopa, all available sources agree that he was born in 1079. Therefore, the year of the first meeting would be 1110. He then leaves Milarepa in his thirty-third year, which would be 1111, which would be the year before the encounter with the demons according to Ngendzong

Tönpa. In Lama Shang's text, unlike later versions of Gampopa's life, he returns to see Milarepa once more. The length of time that has passed is not specified, but it is after receiving Kadampa teachings along with a thousand other monks, and a time of hardship in solitary meditation, during which he became emaciated. Both of these experiences are said to have caused deterioration in his meditation practice. If these dates supplied by Lama Shang are correct, then either Gampopa was not a pupil from the very last years of Milarepa's life, as is often depicted, or there was a considerable passage of time, about ten years, between Gampopa's two visits. Milarepa could not have died soon after 1111 as this would contradict, for example, the date of 1117 given by Ngendzong Tönpa. Lama Shang's dating places Gampopa's pupillage *before* the events described by Ngendzong Tönpa, while other sources depict it as taking place *afterwards*. Thus, the time Lama Shang gives for Gampopa's meeting Milarepa does not accord with later works such as *The Lhorong Dharma History,* in which Gampopa meets Milarepa in the iron ox year of 1121, when he was in his forty-third year. Perhaps the Lama Shang text has thirty-three in error for forty-three, which would match with 1121 and in that case the second visit would have occurred very soon after the first.

Donmo Ripa's account (written circa 1245), included in the text compiled by Dorje Dze-ö after 1344, gives no year for Milarepa's birth, but states that he died in his eighty-second year on the eighth day of the fourth month in a year of the bird.[101] Corresponding western dates for Milarepa's life-span could not be 1024–1105 and 1036–1117, for neither of these agree with the dates supplied by Ngendzong Tönpa and Shiwa Ö. Therefore they must be 1048–1129, which would mean that his birth was in a year of the earth-rat.

Gyadangpa (thirteenth century) states that Milarepa was born in a sheep year[102] and died, in his seventy-third year, in the third spring month of a monkey year.[103] Though in western terms the seventy-third year would normally correspond to seventy-two years old, this life-span works out at seventy-three in western enumeration, and so the year of his death should have been given as seventy-four in Tibetan. The dates 1043–1116 would be too early and 1067–1140 would be too late and therefore the implied dates are 1055–1128, or wood-sheep to earth-monkey.

The Red Annals, completed in 1346 supplies no dates for Milarepa, which implies that none were available for its author.

Khachö Wangpo, the second Shamarpa (1350–1405), in his *Clouds of Blessings,* gives no year for Milarepa's birth or death, only stating that he died in his eighty-fourth year, that is, when 83 years old.[104] However, as we shall see below, Katok Rsewang Norbu credits him with the view that Milarepa was born in the earth-dragon year of 1028. If that was the case, then it implies that the Shamarpa's dates for Milarepa would be 1028–1111, which could not be correct.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (circa fourteenth or early fifteenth century) gives no year for Milarepa's birth, but specifies that he died in his eighty-eighth year during seven days of a solitary retreat that commenced on the fifteenth day of the tiger month in the winter of a hare year.[105] These dates could correspond to 1036–1123 (1048–1135 conflicts with the biographies of his pupils), with birth in a fire-rat year.

A River of Blessings begins by putting Milarepa's birth in a water-dragon year (1052).[106] Towards the conclusion of the text, however, it repeats the life-span (eighty-

seven years) and year of death (1123 or 1135) that was given in the *The Life of Shepay Dorje,* even though this could not possibly agree with a birth-year of 1052.[107]

Möntsepa (writing somewhere between circa 1450 and 1475), in spite of the importance of his account of Milarepa's life, supplies no dates.

The Lhorong Dharma History (written 1446–51) states that Milarepa was born in the iron-dragon year (1040)[108] and died, in his eighty-fourth year in the fourteenth day of the horse month (that is the first month)[109] in the water-hare year (1123).[110] It specifically rejects the dates of birth in a water-dragon year (1052) and death, in his eighty-fourth year, in the wood-hare (1135), because it conflicts with the dates for Gampopa's meeting him.

The Blue Annals, completed by Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal in 1478, lays great stress upon dating and employs cross-referencing between biographies in an attempt to establish accurate dates. Unfortunately, he rarely informs us what his sources are. Gö Lotsawa comes to the same conclusion as *The Lhorong Dharma History*. He decides upon the iron-dragon year (1040) for Milarepa's birth and the water-hare year (1123) for his death during his eighty-fourth year, or in other words, when he was 83 years old.[111]

The narrative of Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa* was based on Montsepa's text, which provided no dates. Tsangnyön Heruka has water-dragon (1052) for the birth-year (in agreement with the *A River of Blessings*) and death in a hare year (in agreement with both *The Life of Shepay Dorje* and *A River of Blessings*). However, Tsangnyön Heruka specifies an element for this hare year, declaring it to have been a wood-hare year (1135), thus providing the specific dates of 1052–1135. The resulting life-span of eighty-three years agrees with *The Blue Annals* and *The Lhorong Dharma History,* as does a birth in a dragon year and death in a hare year, but with a twelve-year difference due to discrepancy in the elements.

Katok Tsewang Norbu attempted to make some sense from this confusion, but fails. He lists four possible dates:[112]

1 The fire-hare year of 1026 derived from the Shiché Ripa *(Zhi-byed Ri-pa)* text, a date which is unattested to elsewhere.
2 The earth-dragon year of 1028, which he claims to be the view of Karmapa Rangjung Dorje and Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo (unattested to elsewhere).[113]
3 The iron-dragon year of 1040 (which agrees with *The Lhorong Dharma History* and *The Blue Annals*).
4 The water-dragon year of 1052 (which agrees with Tsangnyön Heruka and *The Life of Shepay Dorje*).

He reaches the conclusion that Milarepa was born in 1028 and died in 1111 (presumably in agreement with Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo, as described above). These dates are, however, contradicted by the dates supplied by Ngendzong Tönpa and Shiwa Ö. Tsewang Norbu based his calculations on the 'certainty' that Gampopa (1079–1153) met Milarepa in the wood-ox year of 1109 when he was in his thirty-first year, and that Milarepa died soon after in his eighty-fourth year. He states that this came from the reliable source of Gampopa's own pupil. However, he does at times seem to be repeating verbatim from the biography by Gampopa's 'nephew' Sönam Tsering *(bSod-nams Tshe-ring)*. However, 'nephew' here surely means a successor in the uncle-nephew hereditary succession, for the colophon states that the text was written in the iron-dragon year of 1520, 367 years

after Gampopa's death.[114] The solution that Tsewang Norbu arrived at creates only more problems in terms of synchronising it with the dates of other biographies.

Drakar Taso Tulku states that he was greatly concerned that inaccuracies were being repeated and perpetuated without being analysed. He appears to be acquainted with many sources, and specifically mentions Katok Tsewang Norbu. He says that from about four birth dates, he follows Katok Tsewang Norbu's conclusion that Milarepa was born in 1028, the earth-dragon year,[115] dying at the age of 83 (eighty-fourth year) in the iron-rabbit year of 1111, thus repeating an error himself.[116]

Tsangnyön Heruka's dating became popularly adopted in the West, owing to the prevalence of his biography, but has become recently overshadowed by the dates in the translation of the more scholarly *The Blue Annals*.

The various dates available to us that would appear to have a claim to accuracy are 1048–1129 (Donmo Ripa); 1055–1128 (Gyadangpa); 1036–1123 *(The Life of Shepay Dorje);* and 1040–1123 (*The Lhorong Dharma History* and *The Blue Annals*). However, if Milarepa did die soon after Gampopa's last visit to him, and if Lama Shang's dates are correct, then all the above dates are undermined, as are those from the Ngendzong Tönpa texts.

These variants are the result of the biographer, as well as nature, abhorring a vacuum. The absence of any definitively early documentation means that none can be said to be totally reliable.

4
RECHUNGPA'S CHILDHOOD AND MEETING MILAREPA

Birthplace

Rechungpa was born in Rala *(Ra-la),* which is about an hour's drive up a valley leading south-east from Dzongka *(rDzong-dkar),* though in these biographies it is simply referred to as Khab Gungthang 'the capital of Gungthang' which corresponds to the northern half of present day Kyirong *(sKyid-grong)* County[1] on the border with Nepal.[2] Milarepa was also born near to Dzongka, in Tsalung (Tsa-lung), and so was referred to as 'Gungthang Milarepa'. Dzongka was the seat of the Gungthang kings.[3] In Rechungpa's lifetime, the Gungthang King was Chen Lhamchok De *(gCen lHa-mchog lDe),* also known as King Dolè *('Dol-le),*[4] who built Dzongka's 8-metre tall defensive walls.[5] Gungthang is an arid and barren area in contrast to the comparatively lush southern half of Kyirong county, which corresponds with the ancient district of Mangyul *(Mang-yul),* with Kyirong town as its capital.[6]

Although *Ra-la* could be translated as 'Goat Pass' (Garma C.C.Chang translated it as Goat Hill),[7] it is unlikely to have that etymology. Vitali points out the alternative form of Rela *(Re-la),* and calculated that King Nyima Gön (Nyi-ma mGon) founded it in the year 910.[8] Tibetan place-names tend to undergo phonological and orthographic mutations. There are also a number of instances where the name is given as Ralpa *(Ral-pa)* (Gyadangpa, Möntsepa[9] and *The Golden Garland of the Ralung Kagyu*), Rawa of Trang (*The Lhorong Dharma History*[10] and Changchub Zangpo[11]), Trangra (Pema Karpo[12] and Götsang Repa[13]) and Trengra (Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa[14] and Pawo Tsukla Trengwa).[15] *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* says Milarepa went to Nyenam *(sNye-snam)* and then met Rechungpa there. Nyenam is a place strongly associated with Milarepa. It is called Nyanam *(sNya-nam)* in Gyadangpa (spelled *gNya'-nam* in Möntsepa)[16] and Nyanak *(gNya'-nag)* in Changchub Zangpo.[17] This is present-day Nyalam *(gNya'-lam),*[18] to the east of Kyirong valley, in Nyalam county. The source for the error in this text may be discovered in the earliest suriving account of Rechungpa, written by Donmoripa in around 1245. The introduction to Milarepa's meeting with Rechungpa reads:

> Then during that time, he also went to Nyenam *(sNye-nam)*. He came also to Mang[yul]-Gung[thang] *(Mang-gung),* and stayed there.

It would be quite possible for a scribe to skip from one 'also' to the other, for in Tibetan they follow the place names, with the result that his going to Gunthang was omitted.

The thirteenth-century Donmo Ripa, Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo’s (1350–1405) biography of Milarepa, entitled *Clouds of Blessings,* and the the possibly fifteenth-century *A River of Blessings (Byin-brlabs kyi chu-rgyun)* all begin Rechungpa’s story with his meeting with Milarepa. They do not specify the location, but say it took place at a cave named Za-ok (Za-‘og). The cave is mentioned by Gyadangpa but not named.[19] There is a cave named Za-ok, near the present-day village of Rala, which is believed by the locals to be where Rechungpa first met Milarepa.

The date of Rechungpa’s birth

The lack of certain dates for important individuals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is not unusual, but unlike the number of variant biographies and dates for Milarepa, there are fewer sources of information on Rechungpa, and therefore less variation. Our earliest sources, Donmo Ripa and Gyadangpa do not specify when Rechungpa was born or died, although Gyadangpa says Rechungpa died in his eighty-third year on the dawn of the twenty-ninth day of a lunar month.[20] Later texts such as Möntsepa, *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Tsangnyön’s *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra,* Sang-gye Darpo, Pawo Tsukla Trengwa and Changchub Zangpo are also silent on the subject. So is *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage Commencing with Vajradhara* and *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung,* even though they specify many dates and durations of events within Rechungpa’s life.

Pema Karpo gives no date for Rechungpa’s birth, but follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* in stating, in the context of Siddharājñī's prophecy to Rechungpa, that he will live for eighty-eight years,[21] but this is an unreliable passage.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal gives no birth date, but states that Rechungpa died at dawn in the middle spring month, in the house of the Aśrinī asterism (*dbyug-pa [sic],* that is, *dbyug-gu* or *Tha-skar*). That is the ninth lunar month, so middle ‘spring’ may be an error for middle ‘autumn’. Lhatsun thus agrees with Gyadangpa concerning ‘dawn’, but does not specify the day. The year of Rechungpa’s death is given as the iron-hare year (1171), but without a life-span this gives no indication of the year of his birth. However, this year of death appears to be because of making the same error as his contemporary Götsang Repa, described below.

There are only three texts that supply us with a precise date for Rechungpa’s birth: *The Blue Annals* (completed 1478), the third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa’s (1478–1523) *Writings on the Demchok Nyengyu* and Götsang Repa’s biography of Rechungpa (completed in 1547). They are all in agreement that he was born in the wood-rat year (1084). However, the Roerich translation glosses this year as 1083, in what was most likely a typographical error,[22] which has subsequently been perpetuated in other secondary sources, even by E.Gene Smith.[23] Curiously, Smith’s Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre gives 1085 as the birth year, erring in the opposite direction.[24]

Gö Shonnu Pal *(‘Gos gZhon-nu dPal)* (1392–1481) in *The Blue Annals* dismisses an unspecified account of Rechungpa’s living until his eighty-second year, which he says is derived from the story of Rechungpa receiving a life-lengthening practice from Siddharājñī.25 Gyadangpa specified that life-span, though he did not not relate the Siddharājñī story, though there was a reference to her in one of the songs.[26] *The Life and*

Songs of Shepay Dorje, which does relate this story, has Rechungpa's life-span being doubled from the forty-fourth year, which he had then reached, to a span of eighty-eight years.[27] However, that would mean this visit to India took place in the year 1126/7, which contradicts the majority of the dates for Milarepa's death, and all sources have Milarepa still alive when Rechungpa returned from India. Gö Shonnu Pal states that it is evident from a text written by Rechungpa's personal pupils that he lived only until his seventy-eighth year.[28] This text must be the lost *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* which was completed in 1195. Therefore, Gö Shonnu Pal may be relying on it when he gives the wood-rat year (1084) as the year of Rechungpa's birth.[29] He also specifies the iron-snake year (1161) as the year of Rechungpa's death,[30] in disagreement with the iron-hare year of 1171 given by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa. The year 1171 cannot be accurate as it conflicts with accounts in the biographies of Rechungpa's contemporaries. The year 1171 is presumably the result of using the life-span of eighty-eight years as given in the Siddharājñī story, which added ten years to Rechungpa's life.

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (1478–1523) and Götsang Repa concur with *The Blue Annals* in giving the wood-rat (1084) as Rechungpa's birth-year.[31] Götsang Repa agrees with Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal in stating that the birth occurred in the ninth lunar month *(dbyug-pa),* which is roughly equivalent to October, and which he specifies correctly (unlike the Lhatsun text) to be the middle autumn month. The middle autumn month is the same lunar month that both Götsang Repa and Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal give for Rechungpa's death,[32] so that perhaps the month of the death may have been duplicated to serve as the month of the birth. Götsang Repa adds that Rechungpa was conceived nine to ten months previously *within the same (Tibetan) year,* even though it would have to have been in the conclusion of the preceding year. Śākya Rinchen (1744–55), basing himself on the Gadé Gyaltsen text, which is identical with Götsang Repa's, gives the same month and year for his birth.[33]

Kathok Tsewang Norbu (Kaḥ-thog Tshe-dbang Nor-bu)(1698–1755) is alone in his choice of Rechungpa's year of birth. He is driven to this conclusion by his erroneous calculation of Mlarepa's dates as 1028–1111. Equating Rechungpa's birth with the commencement of Mlarepa's solitary retreats, he arrives at the years of water-rat or wood-tiger (1072 or 1074). He states that Rechungpa dies in his seventy-eighth year, which concurs with *The Blue Annals* and presumably the lost *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* and calculates his death to 1249 or 1251. Nevertheless, Tsewang Norbu does note that 'some people' say Rechungpa was born in the wood-rat year (1084).[34]

Other than this aberration, we have, unlike the narrative tradition of Milarepa, no other information about the date of Rechungpa's birth other than the ninth Tibetan month of 1084, which is consistent with the rest of the narrative.

Rechungpa's names

Almost all the sources that mention Rechungpa's family name (in Tibetan, the family name is normally placed before the personal name), agree that it was Nyen *(gNyan),* some giving the variant spelling *gNyen* and *sNyan,* which would have had the same pronounciation.

The one exception is Paljor Zangpo, writing circa 1434, who in *The Great Chronicle of China and Tibet* gives Rechungpa the name Ra Dorje Drakpa *(Rwa rDo-rje Grags-pa)*.[35] *Ra* here appears to be a family name. Perhaps it is derived from a contraction of the name of his homeland Rala *(Ra-la)*. Alternatively, it may be the result of conflating Rechungpa's name with that of his contemporary Ra Dorje Drakpa *(Rwa rDo-rje Grags-pa)* also known as Ra Lotsawa.

Nyen, spelt gNyan, is not an uncommon family name; there have been other Buddhist masters who have been 'Mr. Nyen', in particular Nyen Lotsawa *(gNyan Lo-tsā-ba),* an important translator of the late eleventh century. Śākya Rinchen, even states that Rechungpa was born into 'a "family" *(rigs)* in which Nyen Lotsawa and many other scholars and siddhas had appeared.'[36] However, this is inaccurate, as Rechungpa and Nyen Lotsawa were contemporaries, unless Śākya Rinchen is referring to Nyen in its most generic aspect as a family name, rather than as a particular family-line.

Rechungpa is an epithet; its meaning is 'Junior *Repa*' in contrast with Milarepa's epithet of Rechen *(Ras-chen),* meaning 'Senior *Repa*'. Thus, it is a name he acquired while he was Milarepa's pupil. Our sources vary as to exactly when this occurred, but all agree that it was after he had mastered *caṇḍālī* so that he could wear only cotton while practising it. In fact, the term 'rechung' *(ras-chung)* is occasionally used in the narratives in a generic manner to refer to pupils collectively as 'junior *repas*' *(ras-chung rnams)*.

Donmo Ripa refers to our subject as Nyenchung Repa *(gNyan-chung Ras-pa)*.[37] Nyenchung is a diminutive, meaning 'the young Nyen', presumably in reference to his adoption at an early age by Milarepa. Similarly, *The Red Annals*[38] and Talung Ngawang Namgyal (1571–1626)[39] also refer to him as Nyenchung Repa, while using their different spelling of the family name *(sNyan-chung Ras-pa)*. *A River of Blessings* refers to him in its list of Milarepa's pupils by the abbreviated form Nyenré *(gNyen-ras),* with its variant spelling.[40]

Dorje Drakpa *(rDo-rje Grags-pa),* or its slightly shorter form Dorje Drak *(rDo-rje Grags),* is consistently given as Rechungpa's personal name in all sources that give one. However, the songs attributed to Rechungpa or Milarepa mostly refer to him as Rechungpa or its shorter form: Rechung *(Ras-chung)*.

Almost all sources have Milarepa giving him the name Rechung Dorje Drak following his mastery of *caṇḍālī*. Pema Karpo aldo does so in his biography of Milarepa,[41] but contradicts himself in his biography of Rechungpa, where he describes Rechungpa as being known as Dorje Drakpa before he met Milarepa.[42] This contradiction is derived from the Götsang Repa's biography of Rechungpa, where Milarepa gives Rechungpa the name 'Rechung Dorje Drak',[43] but he is also named Dorje Drakpa just after his birth by his parents' lama,[44] a detail that was repeated by Śākya Rinchen.[45]

The name Dorje Drakpa is unknown to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and is not supplied by the authors of other Milarepa texts in the fourteenth century. This does not necessarily mean that the name was unknown to them. For example, Tsangnyön does not use this name in his *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra*, yet he uses it in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* and *The Life of Milarepa*.[46]

Donmo Ripa, our earliest source on Rechungpa, first introduces him as Lama Lodrowa *(Bla-ma Lo-gro-ba)*.[47] Lodrowa is a corruption or a variant of Lorowa *(Lo-ro-ba)*. Rechungpa, in his later years, was based at Loro *(Lo-ro)* now on the border with Arunachal Pradesh. *The Blue Annals* refers to Rechungpa as Lorowa *(Lo-ro-ba),*[48] Loro

Repa *(Lo-ro Ras-pa),*[49] and Loro Rechungpa.[50] The association of Rechungpa with Loro even appears to have led to an incorrect belief that it was his birthplace.[51]

Family

Donmo Ripa, writing circa 1245, mentions no family other than an unnamed paternal uncle *(khu-bo)* who has sole paternal authority, implying that Rechungpa is an orphan.[52]

Gyadangpa, in the course of his thirteenth-century narrative, mentions a father, mother and paternal uncle, but their personal names are not given and no other relatives are mentioned.

In the sixteenth-century, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (1478–1523), Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa give names for the family. Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa writes that the father was Nyen Darma Drak *(gNyan Dar-ma Grags)* and the mother Ralo Tsuktor Drön *(Ra-lo gTsug-tor sGron)*.[53] Götsang Repa agrees apart from the mother's family name being Ramo *(Ra-mo)* instead of Ralo. Rinchen Namgyal, however, says the father was Sang-gye Kyab *(Sangs-rgyas sKyabs),* and the mother was Lhamo Dze *(lHa-mo mDzes)*. This is one of a number of indications that Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa were supplementing *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* their stated primary source, with other sources.

Sang-gye Darpo, their contemporary, gives us no information on the family. Later writers, such as Tsukla Trengwa, Pema Karpo and Śākya Rinchen, follow Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa and Götsang Repa in naming the father. One text that demurs is the late *The Golden Garland of the Ralung Kagyu* (circa 1799–1803). In both editions of this text, the opening lines—which are one of the few parts that differ from the earlier *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara*—claim that the father's name was the peculiar Nyen Yödrak *(gNyan Yod-grags)*.[54] The letter *nga* can easily be written so that it is confused with *da,* so this could be a corruption of Yongdrak *(Yong-grags)*.

Amongst later authors, only Śākya Rinchen mentions the mother's name, giving her family name as Ramo, but with the spelling *Rwa-mo* and claiming that she was from the family line of Ra Lotsawa *(Rwa Lo-tsā-ba)*. Ra Lotsawa, who was important for the introduction of the *Yamāntaka* teachings in Tibet and appears briefly in Rechungpa's life-story Another famous Ra Lotsawa was that Ra Lotsawa's nephew, who translated and propagated the *Kālacakra* teachings in Tibet. They cannot be Rechungpa's ancestors, therefore, and *Rwa* is probably a corruption of *Ra*. As we have seen earlier, Śākya Rinchen also erroneously claimed Nyen Lotsawa *(gNyan Lo-tsā-ba)* to be Rechungpa's ancestor.

Rechungpa's conception, pregnancy and birth are all described in Götsang Repa, the most detailed narrative of Rechungpa's life. It is made clear that Rechungpa is a buddha who has chosen his parents and birth. It closely follows the traditional narrative of the Buddha's conception, who entered a womb on seeing five favourable factors. Similarly, Rechungpa, sees the time, place, class, paternal ancestry and maternal ancestry of his birth. Membership of the four Indian classes or castes *(varṇa): śūdra, vaiśya, kṣatriya, brahman,* was of great importance in an Indian context. This passage[55] is a rather obvious transplant into the context of Tibetan society. Rechungpa's class is said to be *dmangs-rigs,* the standard Tibetan translation for *śūdra,* the lowest of the four 'castes', but this is

a rather forced equivalence to the rigid four-fold stratification of Indian society. The comparative social mobility of Tibetan society is exemplified in the narrative itself, where Rechungpa rises to join the ranks of the upper classes through marriage.

Götsang Repa does not wish to give the impression of a base birth, however, and says that Rechungpa was born into 'the supreme mantra-born Dharma-possessing class', because his grandfather was Nyen Mepo Lharjé *(gNyan Me-pho lHa-rje),* a pupil of Marpa. The mother qualifies for this rank too, because she has the signs of a *vajra-ḍākinī,* an enlightened female holder of the *mantrayāna* who has taken human form. The conception is no ordinary affair either. Mimicking the Buddha's descent from Tuṣita heaven, Rechungpa's conception is accompanied by light-rays from Alakāvatī the realm of Vajrapāṇi, which purify the mother's womb before Rechungpa, in the form of a shining, crystal, five-pronged *vajra* descends from the sky and enters it. Deities sing that Vajrapāṇi is sending an emanation into Tibet; all the buddhas and bodhisattvas look on and listen as the earth shakes, and lights, rainbows and sounds occur throughout Gungthang. The parents experience a world transcending state of non-thought, and in their dreams they see pure realms and receive offerings from *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs*. The parents love their as yet unborn first child. The birth is accompanied by marvellous omens, such as a rain of flowers. The baby does not even appear to be human, but resembles a child of the gods; he has all the major and minor distinguishing marks of a great being, which the Buddha also possessed.[56]

What is most striking about this passage is how ill it fits with the narrative that immediately follows. The mother appears to forget all her realisation and experience and becomes the most heartless mother in Tibetan literature. In the Gyadangpa narrative, Milarepa expresses surprise at how nasty she is, and Rechungpa remarks that even though it's usually stepmothers who are wicked, his mother is the one exception to that rule.[57]

The text offers no explanation as to why Rechungpa, allegedly a buddha, is now plunged into torment and subject to the effects of karma like any other ordinary being would be. There is no longer any mention of major and minor signs. If it was assumed by the narrator that he was indeed golden, with hands reaching down to his knees, and so on, one would expect at least a passing reference to it in the narrative. Nor is any reason given, other than that she married an unpleasant person, for his mother's personality transformation, which makes the qualities of enlightenment seem very transient.

Götsang Repa includes in his introductory section an account of Rechungpa's previous lives;[58] this also appears in Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal,[59] with the texts coinciding almost verbatim. This will be examined in more detail in the final chapter when we look at Rechungpa's identity as an enlightened being. It seems unlikely that these two authors obtained this information from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* as one would then expect it to be consistent with the rest of the narrative. Also, if these ideas had already been in circulation for a long time, one would expect some reference in earlier works to Rechungpa's status as an emanation of Vajrapāṇi. However, this identification of Rechungpa is only to be found in later texts.

The 'orphan' with a parent

In Gyadangpa, Rechungpa sings:[60]

I am happier now in Tröpuk[61] cave in Nyanam[62]
Than in my past homeland of Ralpa.[63]

I am happier now, being with my guru,
Than when I was the servant of my mother and uncle.

I am happier now, cleaning this hut,
Than when I tilled my father's field.

I am happier now, being Rechung Dorje Drak,
Than when I was 'the pitiful, fatherless child'.

I am happier now, with a single, pure cotton robe,
Than when I was always hot or cold.

I am happier now, being nourished by meditation,
Than when I was always hungry and thirsty.

I am happier now, being someone who is offered to,
Than when I inspired pity on being seen or heard.

The term *do-phrug ser-skye* is here translated, in order to keep consistency of meaning in the song, as 'pitiful, fatherless child'. There are variants of this song in other texts, in which this term also varies. In Möntsepa, it is *da-phrug skye-ser*.[64] In Götsang Repa it is *dwa-phrug kha-ser*.[65] The Gade Gyaltsen edition of the Götsang Repa text, and *A River of Blessings* have *da-sprug kha-ser*.[66] *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* has *bu-chung kha-ser*.[67] *Da-phrug* and *Dwa-phrug* are merely alternative spellings,[68] with the likelihood that the *dwa* form is the original, as a word is more likely to lose a *wa-zur* (a subscribed *wa*) than to gain one. Normally, when reading Sanskrit in transliteration, a letter with a subscribed *wa,* such as *dwa* (representing *dva*) would be pronounced 'do'. Therefore *do* in this context is likely to be a corruption of *dwa*.

The New Tibetan Dictionary (Dag-yig gSar-bsgrigs) defines *dwa-phrug* as 'a child whose parents have died, when (he or she) was young'.[69] *The Great Dictionary (Tshig-*

mdzos Chen-mo) adds that *dwa phrug kha ser* is a young orphan *(dwa phrug chung ngu)*.[70]

In spite of this, the song clearly states that Rechungpa's mother was still alive in his childhood.

It is probable that the wicked uncle and mother narrative was added to an original less dramatic narrative, as found in Donmo Ripa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narratives thus creating this anomaly. One would expect a narrator or singer to remedy such an obvious contradiction, but this term was also used for a child who has lost only a father, a 'semi-orphan'. This is confirmed by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, who states that *dwa-phrug* is used for a child who has lost either one or both parents, while *kha-ser* refers to a child being in a pitiful state due to unfortunate circumstances.[71] Also, Charles Ramble has pointed out the term *Do-ser,* in current usage, which means a child who has lost one parent.[72] Therefore, there would be no inconsistency between the term and narrative through the addition of a surviving parent.

When did this father die? Donmo Ripa does not mention the father. Gyadangpa merely says that this occurred when Rechungpa was 'little'.[73] Möntsepa, relying on Gyadangpa, merely repeats this, as do *The Blue Annals,*[74] Tsangnyön,[75] Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal,[76] Sang-gye Darpo[77] (who, as in Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra*, adds that Rechungpa was his parents' only child) and Changchub Zangpo.[78]

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (1478–1523) appears to be the earliest author to supply a time; stating that the death occurred in Rechungpa's eighth year (which would be circa 1091).[79] It is unlikely that he obtained this information from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* as Rinchen Namgyal would surely have reproduced this small but salient detail. However, the isolated narrative transmission of *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* and the *The Golden Garland of the Ralung Kagyu* also state that the death occurred in 'about his eighth year'.[80] Götsang Repa relied on another source, for he states that the father died when Rechungpa reached his seventh year,[81] which is repeated by Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (*dPa-bo Tsukla Trengwa,* 1504–66) in his *A Feast for Scholars*.[82]

Meeting Milarepa

Within the earlier works we find three distinct versions of Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa:

1 Donmo Ripa and the early Karma Kagyu works.
2 Gyadangpa and *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage*.
3 *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje.*

Donmo Ripa, our earliest source on Rechungpa, relies heavily on Gampopa for his version of Milarepa's life. Donmo Ripa makes no mention of a surviving mother, only a paternal uncle. This uncle complains that Rechungpa, instead of staying up in the hills with Milarepa, should keep helping the village during the busy time of harvest.[83] If this was written in 1245, as it seems to have been, it may represent an early narrative foundation upon which a wicked uncle and mother theme was added.

The wicked uncle narrative first appears in Gyadangpa in the mid-thirteenth century but does not reappear in other narrative transmissions, apart from *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage,* until the fifteenth century. The narrative function of the uncle is to give the context and the cause for Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa. Gyadangpa's narrative has all the essential factors that will be found in all sources that have the wicked uncle scenario for Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa. In Gyadangpa, the father dies while Rechungpa is young; his father's brother marries his mother, and they both turn against him, resulting in his being adopted by Milarepa.[84]

A wicked paternal uncle who takes advantage of a father's early death is also a salient feature in most versions of Milarepa's life, including Tsangnyön Heruka's famous work. However, as described in Chapter 3, the earliest versions of Milarepa's life (Gampopa, Lama Shang and Donmo Ripa) do not contain this early death of the father. The earliest surviving example of this is in Gyadangpa's text, written at least ten years after Donmo Ripa, sixty years after Lama Shang and a hundred years after Gampopa, where the life-story has acquired a number of dramatic elements, such as the mother's wish for vengeance and Milarepa's building and demolition of houses on Marpa's instruction. The earliest source for Rechungpa's life, that is, *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* has not yet come to light, but comparison of Gyadangpa with Donmo Ripa's version appears to indicate a degree of fictionalisation may have already occurred in Gyadangpa concerning Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa.

An essential point that any narrative has to address is how Rechungpa comes to meet Milarepa at a cave up above his village. Although *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* has probably the latest of these three versions, it is introduced first because of its simplicity: he is brought along by a group of people that come to receive Milarepa's teachings bringing with them Rechungpa, who is said to be a 'little orphan' *(bu-chung kha-ser)*.[85] Rechungpa becomes entranced by Milarepa's singing and spontaneously enters a state of meditation.[86] Therefore these people offer him to Milarepa, who adopts him and teaches him meditation.

In Donmo Ripa's version Milarepa has been moving around the area from cave to cave. Rechungpa comes to Za-ok cave alone, because he is herding donkeys. He enters a state of meditation on hearing Milarepa's song and the unattended donkeys wander home. He returned home the next day and has to explain what had happened. Early the next day, Rechungpa herds the donkeys to the same place, and seeks out the singer. Milarepa asks what he dreamt the previous night. Rechungpa says, 'I dreamt that I faced the sun in the south-east and went onto a grassy plain. A crowd of young women brought out flower-garlands from a churn and placed them on my head.' It is possible that that in Donmo Ripa *dong-po* (churn) is a misspelling for *sdong-po* (tree). After Rechungpa agrees to become Milarepa's pupil, an unnamed paternal uncle complains to Rechungpa that the village needs him to continue with his work during harvest time. Nevertheless, Rechungpa leaves the area with Milarepa. Because of Rechungpa's young age, Milarepa has to carry him across the wide plain of Palmo Palthang *(dPal-mo dPal-thang),* which is not far from Rala.[87]

According to second Shamarpa, Khachö Wangpo (*mKha'-spyod dBang-po* 1350–1405), who is evidently basing himself upon Donmo Ripa's text, Rechungpa goes up into the mountains herding donkeys. He hears Milarepa singing and goes to him. However, the detail of his entering a state of meditation and his return to the village is omitted.

Milarepa asks Rechungpa about his dreams, and the answer is almost the same, though the detail of women bringing flowers out from a churn (or tree) is omitted.[88] He offers to take on Rechungpa as his pupil, and the boy accepts the offer.

The Shamarpa's version is repeated in *A River of Blessings* as the first of two alternative versions of the meeting. The second being simply that of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* repeated verbatim.

The third and most elaborate version of the meeting is in the thirteenth-century Gyadangpa. This proves to be the narrative with greater survival power as it continues in different versions over the next centuries and absorbs elements from other narratives. It was repeated verbatim in the *Demchok Nyengyu Biographies (bDe-mchog sNyan-brgyud biographies),* written after 1360.

In this version, Rechungpa's father died when he was little and his mother married his paternal uncle. Falling under his influence she develops a dislike of Rechungpa. Rechungpa is, however, very intelligent. He learns to read with a Nyingma lama, and becomes able to read texts for villagers who pay him with tsampa dough. Nevertheless, 'his mother took no care of him other than to bind the texts and tie on his belt'. He brought the food to his mother at a designated place each afternoon. One day, he had to wait for his payment, and by the time he arrived he found only a message from his mother, rebuking him, and telling him not to bother ever coming home again. Distraught, he went up into the mountains where he met Milarepa in a cave and gave him the tsampa. On hearing his story Milarepa said that they have had similar childhoods.[89]

As a narrative cause for the meeting, this is dramatically stronger than that in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Donmo Ripa and the Karma Kagyu texts, but is slightly weaker in terms of internal narrative logic. If the mother herself is able to read and write why is she so dependent on Rechungpa's reading abilities? Perhaps the narrator meant to imply that she had left a verbal message, but with whom? And why should a child, instead of turning to neighbours or family, go up to an inhospitable cave in the mountains? While there could be explanations, none are provided. We shall see that later narrators, while using this basic scenario, had recourse to different solutions to explain the sequence of events.

The anonymous *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara* in the NGMPP (Nepalese and German Manuscript Preservation Project) collection, has very interesting variants, most of which are repeated in *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* (circa 1799–1803), but there are differences in their opening lines. *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* changes the uncle's name to match that found in Götsang Repa's sixteenth-century version, and 'marrying' *(bsdus)* has been corrupted to 'beat' *(brdungs),* but it appears that the redactor of the *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* made few revisions after the first page. The text supplies a much simpler version than Gyadangpa, so that while thin on some details at least avoids Gyadangpa's narrative problems. This may therefore represent an earlier version of the 'Rechungpa as reader' narrative.

The version as found in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara* says that Rechunpa's father died when he was eight, his mother married his uncle, named Nyen Khyibar *(gNyan Khyi-'bar)*. They hated him, but on the suggestion of neighbours he studied reading with his father's lama. In his twelfth year, for no explained reason, he took his food payment to Milarepa, who said to him, 'Your grandfather was a pupil of my *lharje* (guru), Mar-pa,' and became his teacher.[90]

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels, though an early text does not describe Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa. The text is a rather unskilful summary of its source, so that Rechungpa appears too abruptly in the narrative later on.

Changchub Zangpo's compilation, entitled *Saṃvara-ḍāka-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud),* preserves a biography of Milarepa that is related to both Gyadangpa and *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* and also has a biography of Rechungpa that repeats the Gyadangpa version, but as an ungainly summary.

The first sign of the recycling of the Gyadangpa version of the narrative into a new form comes two centuries later, in the fifteenth century. *The Lhorong Dharma History* briefly alludes to it by saying that Rechungpa supported his mother and uncle through payments for his readings. It makes no allusion to any hardships experienced by Rechungpa and does not describe the circumstances under which he met Milarepa. However, it specifies that he was in his thirteenth year at the time. The dream Rechungpa describes is based on the Shamarpa version.

Therefore *The Lhorong Dharma History* has blended elements from the Gyadangpa and Shamarpa versions. Gyadangpa's entire biography of Rechungpa was reproduced in its entirety in the *Demchog Nyengyu Biographies* (written after 1360) and was then refashioned by Möntsepa in the fifteenth century, all of this occurring within the Drukpa Kagyupa tradition.

The Drukpa Kagyu master Möntsepa, writing circa 1450–75, repeats some essential elements of the passage as found in the Gyadangpa narrative, but only about twenty per cent of the words found in Gyadangpa re-occur, with most of them transposed. The narrative is simpler than Gyadangpa's; leaving out in this section the mother's and uncle's dislike of Rechungpa; He is simply said to go up to the mountains on not finding them at home. Therefore, its narrative mutation is primarily the result of omissions, though he specifies that he met Milarepa in a ravine, sitting amongst sand dunes.[91]

The second Drukchen, Kunga Paljor (1428–1507), a contemporary of Möntsepa, provides no details on Rechungpa's life, but concurs with *The Lhorong Dharma History* that the meeting with Milarepa took place in Rechungpa's thirteenth year.[92]

A few years after Möntsepa's death, Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal *('Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dPal)* (1392–1481) completed his mammoth work, *The Blue Annals*. Gö Lotsawa, who was keen on chronology, specifies that Rechungpa, or as he writes it, Rechungwa *(Ras-chung-ba),* met Milarepa in the wood-dog year (early 1094 to early 1095), in his eleventh year.[93] This differs from *The Lhorong Dharma History* and Kunga Paljor's *History of the Kagyu* for it makes Rechungpa two years younger, but was probably calculated from accounts of Milarepa's life, for he introduces Rechungpa's year of birth in terms of its correlation with Milarepa's dates, for he states that their meeting occurred the year after Milarepa's nine years of solitary retreat. Thus, according to Gö Lotsawa, this meeting took place in 1094, with a 10-year old Dorje Drakpa meeting a 54-year old Milarepa. There is no mention of hostility from his mother and uncle at this stage. In fact, he is said to have pleased them with his earnings, though he is now his 'uncle's servant'. No reason is given for his meeting Milarepa in a ravine *(grog),* as in Möntsepa.

The textual correspondences with Gyadangpa are minimal, merely a few words such as *Gung-thang, pha* (father) and *grog* (ravine). The word for payments, *skyos ma,* is spelled *'khyos-ma* in Gyadangpa and is used at a different point in the narrative.[94] The

only substantial text-element to reappear is 'the uncle and mother married' *(khu bo dang ma 'dus te),* but with uncle and mother transposed (Gyadangpa: *ma dang khu-bo 'dus-te*) which accords with the lessening of the narrative importance of the mother. It is however probably a stock phrase, and does not imply direct reliance on Gyadangpa. There is the same minimal textual correspondence with Möntsepa. This divergence gives the impression that Gö Lotsawa did not use the Gyadangpa text directly, but some oral or textual variant of that tradition. Gyadangpa's narrative emphasis on the wicked mother will not reappear in any other version.

This omission left a gap in the narrative, which was eventually filled, not by *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* simple version, which was ignored by all later authors, but by the only other existing narrative element: the donkey herder.

This syncretism is first found in the works of Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507). His two versions of the life of Rechungpa also reveal narrative variations occurring in works by the same author.

The narrative elements of Rechungpa as herder (as found in *Clouds of Blessings*) and that of entering instant *samādhi* (as found in the *Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*) were both present in the earliest available version—that of Donmo Ripa. They were presented separately, as alternative accounts, in *A River of Blessings*. Tsangnyön, in both his *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra (bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud kyi gZhung-'brel),* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* merged these two elements with the mother's remarriage and his work as a reader, as in Gyadangpa. As in *The Lhorong Dharma History,* there is no explicit mention of any mistreatment or parental animosity before Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa. On the contrary, there is the impression that he was well cared for, for he is provided with an education in reading. Tsangnyön's texts also specify that the uncle and mother were following custom by marrying and bringing up Rechungpa, which emphasises normalcy rather than disfunctionality. The unpleasantness in Gyadangpa is not eliminated completely, however, for we shall see that the mistreatment *following* Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa are retained.

The donkey-herder motif loses one narrative detail in Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra:* the herd Rechungpa is responsible for is no longer said to be composed of donkeys, but simply of 'animals'. This particular omission is filled in by Tsangnyön in his other work, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* by a new detail: the animals are specified to be oxen. A trace of the donkey element remains, in that Rechungpa is said to be riding a donkey while herding the oxen. In neither of Tsangnyön's versions did he preserve the auspicious dream that accompanied the donkey-herding motif in earlier works. This is replaced by the first appearance of a cruicial element: a prophecy that leads Milarepa to meeting Rechungpa. In Tsangnyön, their meeting is no longer by chance. On the contrary, the reason why Milarepa comes to Rala *in the first place* is to meet Rechungpa, for he was informed by a *ḍākiṇī* in a vision that he will there meet the 'worthy vessel' that will inherit the Karṇatantra *(sNyan-rgyud)* teachings. The dream in the earlier narratives has therefore become superfluous.

This is the earliest surviving text, still in its original form, to refer to Rechungpa as a special being from birth. Tsangnyön rejected the earlier tradition of the emanation status of Milarepa by explicitly emphasising his unenlightened status in the early part of his life.[95] However, Tsangnyön still portrayed Milarepa as a person who was marked out for

spiritual supremacy, for his teacher Marpa has a prophetic dream concerning Milarepa's importance shortly before their meeting. Therefore, this passage in the life of Rechungpa does not imply that Tsangnyön is presenting Rechungpa as enlightened from before birth (as Tsangnyön's pupils, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa will do), but merely as one who is karmically ready for enlightenment.

Rechungpa's biography in *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*[96] is dry compared to Tsangnyön's later works, but describes that he met Milarepa while herding animals, and entered a state of meditation on seeing his face (and not on hearing him singing as in the earlier works). From that point on he decides to bring his payments to Milarepa instead of to his parents.[97]

In *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* Tsangnyön brings some life into his earlier version by adding details to the narrative. Of particular importance in terms of the contemporary image of Rechungpa is a reference to his clear pronounciation and, in particular, his good looks. The meeting is preceded not only by the ḍākiṇī giving the prophecy to Milarepa but also Milarepa's encounter with those engaged in building the town walls at Dzongka *(Khab Gung-thang)*. While riding a donkey and herding oxen, he becomes entranced by hearing Milarepa's singing, as in the earlier works, and abandons the cattle.

The third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa's (1478–1523), *Writings on the Demchok Nyengyu (bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud kyi Yig-cha),* only briefly describes Rechungpa's earliest years. As with Tsangnyön, there is no early mistreatment by his mother and uncle, and one could think that he had been well cared for. The way he meets Milarepa is not described, only saying that it took place in Rechungpa's twelfth year, a year earlier than that given by *The Lhorong Dharma History* and his Drukchen predecessor, and a year later than Gö Lotsawa's calculation. There is no known source for this date, but it is also found in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara*.[98]

Sang-gye Darpo merely repeats verbatim from Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*.[99]

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (1473–1557), a personal pupil of Tsangnyön, wrote the earliest surviving biography of Rechungpa that is of considerable length. However, it concentrates on his later years, and his childhood is described only briefly.[100] Here we can compare the pupil's version with the two that his own teacher wrote. Textual analysis demonstrates that Rinchen Namgyal adapted the passage from his teacher's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*, as did Tsangnyön himself when writing his *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. They both substitute synonyms for certain words and phrases, but not always for the same words, and sometimes using different synonyms. This is immediately obvious from the Tibetan, but inevitably obscured by any translation. Rinchen Namgyal cannot be using *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* as a source[101] for his version has the characteristics of a late work that combines the elements of two narrative traditions: Rechungpa the reader from Gyadangpa, and Rechungpa the herder from Donmo Ripa and the second Shamarpa. It emphasises that he makes his mother and stepfather (who had married by following custom) very happy with his earnings; no difficulties are described apart from the family

being very poor and there is no description of how he came to meet Milarepa, other than 'his karmic latencies were awakened'.[102]

The most developed and best-known version of Rechungpa's life is the immense work by Götsangpa Natsok Rangdrol (rGod-tshang-pa sNa-tshogs Rang-grol), a.k.a Götsang Repa.

The author claims to base himself primarily upon the same source as Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal used, *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* but his version of the early part of Rechungpa's life differs from that found in both Rinchen Namgyal and Tsangnyön. It is only the latter half of Rechungpa's life that coincides with Rinchen Namgyal's version, thus revealing a common source.

In the chapter on Rechungpa's birth, there are four sub-chapters. The last of these is entitled, '[Rechungpa] undergoes hardship, experiences directly the truth of suffering, develops an intense desire for liberation and enters the supreme teaching under his guru.'[103]

This version of Rechungpa's childhood supplies more details than did any earlier versions. Nevertheless, Götsang Repa does not reproduce those principal elements in Gyadangpa's version that had been ignored by previous authors. Though some elements from Gyadangpa reoccur, the result is quite different in tone. Instead of the mother being the principal wicked character in the tale, it is now the uncle, here named Nyen Baré *(gNyan 'Bar-re)* who is said to be cruel and enjoys doing bad actions. The mother's loss of maternal affection is mentioned in passing, but as the result of the influence of the uncle, who is the cause of all Rechungpa's suffering, resembling Milarepa's uncle in Tsangnyön's version of Milarepa's life. This parallel narrative development is surely more than a coincidence. The popularity of these versions certainly demonstrates that an ursuping wicked uncle (as in Milarepa and Hamlet) is an effective dramatic element.

Götsang Repa therefore makes certain that the uncle was not responsible for Rechungpa learning to read, but that this was entirely the work of 'sympathetic neighbours'. He learns from his father's lama, who the later author Śākya Rinchen, basing himself on this work, assumed was the one who gave Rechungpa the name Dorje Drakpa. Götsang Repa declares Rechungpa to be an emanation, but there are only a few places in the narrative where this can be emphasised, and one of them is here, for he learns to read uncannily rapidly—'mastering it through just being shown the letters. People said of him, "Dorje Drak learns as if he was an emanation"'. The dire poverty mentioned by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal is not specified, so that Rechungpa supporting his parents seems like exploitation. This is a good opening for a dramatic narrative: a poor child plunged into terrible suffering by fate—'There seemed to be no way out of Rechungpa's sadness and suffering'—but nevertheless, with great difficulty and the aid of his spiritual mentor, he will rise above his origins.[104]

The meeting with Milarepa is described in a new chapter. Here one can see many sources being knitted together. It commences with the prophecy from the *ḍākinī* received by Milarepa in Dorje Dzong *(rDo-rje rDzong),* as had been described by Tsangnyön. Götsang Repa generally maintains a strong correspondence with the text of the *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* throughout much of the description of Rechungpa's relationship with Milarepa, but deviates markedly in the short passage that describes how their meeting took place. There are certain phrases that nevertheless correspond, such as: 'into the upper reaches of the valley' *(lung pa'i phu…na yar),* 'riding

a donkey' *(bong bu zhon nas),* 'perceptions transformed' *(snang ba 'gyur)*. Götsang Repa also attempts to bring in elements from Möntsepa, and the result is not particularly successful. Not content with the solution of placing Rechungpa in the mountains by the simple act of herding, which Tsangnyön chose, he combines it with Möntsepa's version in which Rechungpa returns from reading and on not finding his uncle or mother at home goes up to the mountains. That itself was Möntsepa's truncated and rather meaningless version of the earlier Gyadangpa narrative. Also, Götsang Repa has Rechungpa becoming curious as to why many people are heading up into the upper reaches of the valley. This element appears to have been absorbed from the dream he will have in India, when he is cured of his skin illness, a dream that is also found in the narrative tradition of Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Not wishing to lose the herding narrative element as it appeared in Tsangnyön, Götsang Repa is forced to have Rechungpa follow these people, while also riding a donkey and driving animals before him. He then has Rechungpa become entranced at Milarepa's singing, an element that Tsangnyön had derived from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and spontaneously gives his food-payment to Milarepa, who remarks, as in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara,* that Rechungpa's grandfather had been a pupil of Marpa though reworded so that *lharje* is the grandfather's name. Milarepa declares that the boy would make an excellent *repa*. Remarkably, Götsang Repa appears to introduce at this point yet another element from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* which we have not seen in a text since the thirteenth century. The other people present offer Rechungpa to Milarepa. This makes narrative sense in the context of the *Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* where Rechungpa is introduced as an orphan in the company of these people, but inserted into this version it does not sit well with Rechungpa having parents at home. Götsang Repa concludes this passage by stating that Rechungpa was in his eleventh year at that time,[105] as in *The Blue Annals*.

This is therefore a more ambitious attempt at a comprehensive compilation of sources into an eventful, crowded, but somewhat confused narrative.

What influence did Götsang Repa's version of the meeting have on future authors? Many later works that focus on Milarepa give no details of the meeting, or do not even mention it.

The meeting is briefly described by Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (1504–66) the Karma Kagyupa historian, in his *A Feast for Scholars,*[106] which was composed between 1545 and 1565. However the passage is very brief and is merely a simplified version of the Gyadangpa narrative tradition. Pawo Tsukla Trengwa even repeats textual components used by Gyadangpa. Compare Gyadangpa's 'the mother and uncle married, and the mother, living under the uncle's [influence], developed a strong aversion to him' *(ma dang khu bo' dus te/ma khu'i go [sic. 'og] tu sdad pas shin tu sdang bar byung)* with Tsukla Trengwa's 'The married mother and uncle developed a strong aversion towards him' *(yum dang khu bo 'dus pa shin tu sdang bar gyur)*. Götsang Repa had 'Rechungpa's mother fell under his power so that they both developed a strong aversion towards [Rechungpa]' *(de'i dbang du ma yang song ste ma khu gnyis kyis shin tu sdang bar gyur),* but Tsukla Trengwa and Götsang Repa's adaptations of the narrative are evidently independent of each other.

Tsukla Trengwa's contemporary, the third Drukchen, Pema Karpo (1527–92) completed his history, popularly known as *Pema Karpo's History of the Dharma (Pad-*

ma dKarpo Chos-'byung), in 1575, about ten years after Tsukla Trengwas's death. His history contains two versions of the meeting, one in the context of Milarepa's biography and one in Rechungpa's biography. Here again we have the case of two versions by the same author and they often do not agree. Consistency does not appear to have been Pema Karpo's primary concern.

The passage in the Milarepa biography is very brief, but has some incidences of textual correlation to the equivalent passage in Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra,* but it could also be a summarized version of the Götsang Repa text, as there is some textual correlation, such as the use of *khrong-nge lus* ('became immobile') and Rechungpa is not a solitary herder but comes to meet Milarepa *with* a group of herders.[107]

Pema Karpo follows the biography of Milarepa with a brief account of Rechungpa's life. The simple version is composed of narrative elements from Götsang Repa and there are a number of word correlations, so that it clearly appears to have been based upon it, providing the first evidence of Götsang Repa's influence on Rechungpa biographies. The story is drastically simplified, though there is an emphasis on Rechungpa's physical beauty, stating that 'his resultant body was pure, he was like a god's child'. As in Möntsepa, Pema Karpo solves the narrative problem of bringing Rechungpa to Milarepa by simply omitting it.[108]

Talung Ngawang Namgyal (1571–1626) completed his Dharma History named *A Wonderful Ocean (Chos-'byung Ngo-mtshar rGya-mtsho)* in 1609. This contains the briefest reference to the meeting. The textual element of 'seeing his face' *(zhal mthong)* implies reliance on Tsangnyön's *The Songs of Milarepa* rather than on Götsang Repa, which would accord with the growing fame and influence of the former.[109]

Śākya Rinchen (the Je Khenpo of Bhutan from 1744 to 1755, which would have been the year of his death) wrote that he relied on the Rechungpa biography by Gade Gyaltsen (which is identical to Götsang Repa's text, apart from the author's colophon). He provides a straightforward summary of the Götsang Repa version, without any additions, merely omitting certain details. For example, when Rechungpa follows people heading towards the upper reaches of the valley, his riding a donkey and herding animals is omitted. They were not integral to the narration and had merely muddied the flow in Götsang Repa.[110]

The History of Drakar Taso, written in 1828, simply states that the meeting took place at Za-ok cave in Rala.

5
RECHUNGPA'S STRANGE ILLNESS AND CURE

In this chapter, we shall examine a major event in Rechungpa's life following his meeting with Milarepa, although it appears only in Gyadangpa and the texts that follow his narrative lead. Rechungpa falls ill and goes to Mithila, just south of Nepal, in order to receive healing instructions from a teacher named Varacandra.

The absence of this passage in primary sources

Rechungpa's sickness and cure are absent from Donmo Ripa, *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* Khachö Wangpo's (1350–1405) *Clouds of Blessings, The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* as well as such later works as *A River of Blessings* and Talung Ngawang Namgyal (1571–1626).

In Donmo Ripa, Milarepa and Rechungpa immediately leave Rechungpa's home area, Milarepa carries Rechungpa across the Palthang *(dPal-thang)* plain, and then they stay in a succession of specified remote locations.[1]

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* after the initial meeting,[2] Milarepa takes Rechungpa, in spite of his reluctance, to a remote forested area in Lhomön (lHo-mon) (which refers to an area within present-day Nepalese territory).[3] There then follows an account of many years spent in such locations[4] until the conflict and debate with Kadampa monks[5] that precipitates Rechungpa's journey to India in search of the Karṇatantra *(sNyan-rgyud)* instructions.[6]

The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel, a twelfth-century text by Rechungpa's pupils, is now lost, but its colophon was preserved by Götsang Repa.[7] It indicates that the lost biography contained a description of Rechungpa's visit to India to study under Tipupa, but has no indication that it included an earlier visit to be cured of an illness by Varacandra. It is unlikely that Götsang Repa's own description of Rechungpa's sickness and cure was repeated verbatim from that primary source, for it is evidently composite and has less narrative consistency and clarity than Gyadangpa's thirteenth-century version.

The sickness

Whether there is a historical basis to this story or not, what is this *‘dze* sickness that Rechungpa is said to suffer from? His body swells and has bleeding sores that miraculously fall off his body during the night he is healed.

The illness is called tsen-dze *(btsan-‘dze)*. *‘Dze* is an alternative spelling for the more common *mdze*. A Tsen *(bTsan)* is a class of local deity in Tibet, and they are said to cause illness. The word is also used in compounds to mean powerful. *mDze* is classed as an illness that is caused by non-humans.[8]

mDze is normally translated into English as leprosy, but this is correct only in its archaic usage. Although leprosy is a *mdze,* a *mdze* may not necessarily be leprosy, which is now termed Hansen’s disease. Medical terminology was very limited in Tibetan and various illnesses were covered by one word. Imprecise illness classification was also common in the west, from a present-day perspective, up to the nineteenth century. Thus *mdze,* as it appears in these narratives, does correspond to the archaic or medieval use of ‘leprosy’ in Europe, which referred to a number of skin diseases.

According to *The Great Dictionary (Tshig mDzod Chen-mo)* there are eighteen or thirty-six kinds of *mdze*.[9] Chandra Das does translate *mdze* as leprosy but gives *kuṣṭha* as the Sanskrit equivalent. Monier Williams states that there are eighteen forms *kuṣṭha*, only eleven of which are serious.[10] One form, *koṭha*, seems to be ringworm or impetigo,[11] while *śvitra* (Tibetan: *mdze-skya*) is translated as both ‘white leprosy’ and vitiligo.[12] Thus the Tibetan term *mdze* may refer to a variety of illnesses other than Hansen’s disease. For example, the Tibetan term *langshu (glang-zhu),* can refer to two separate illnesses: an itching skin-disease in which the skin becomes white and has soft, small, white lumps and a type of *mdze* in which the skin and flesh becomes thick, like an ox’s nape, and cracks.[13] The latter is probably synonymous with *pakdze (lpags-mdze)* in which it is said the colour of the skin becomes ashen and rough to the touch, like an elephant’s skin. This is clearly distinct from the *mdze* named *paknya* (*lpags-myags,* literally ‘rotting skin’), in which the skin of the body rots, and there are running sores *(gram-pa),*[14] and the *mdze* named *shuwa khagya (shu-ba kha-brgya),* ‘hundred-mouth lesions’, in which flesh dies, has lesions and many cracks.[15] An illness called *chuser nakpo* (*Chu-ser nag-po,* ‘black lymph’) on the other hand is not classed as *mdze,* even though its symptoms include a darkened, itchy skin with the loss of hair and eyebrows. However, it is said that it can develop into *mdze*.[16]

It is uncertain, therefore, which specific kinds of *mdze* correspond to the two forms of leprosy (or Hansen’s disease) recognised in Western medical literature, both of which are caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. In Tuberculoid Hansen’s disease there are raised, scaly hairless lesions on the skin. Lepromatous Hansen’s disease is the well-known form of leprosy, in which there are swellings on the body and the loss of eyebrows, nose-cartilage and the bones of the fingers and toes.

Leprosy and a variety of other skin illnesses are often associated with *nāgas,* the serpent deities of India, which in China were identified with dragons and in Tibet with the water and river deities called *lü (Klu)*. Gyadangpa makes no direct reference to nāgas,

only to a 'deity of the ground', but the Vajrapāṇi-Garuḍa practice is directed specifically against *nāgas*. The *garuḍa* is portrayed biting a *nāga,* and Vajrapāṇi wears the five castes of the *nāgas* as body adornments in the form of snakes in five different colours.

Rechungpa is not alone in Tibetan religious history in being miraculously cured of an illness named *mdze*. Drigung Jigten Gonpo *('Bri-gung 'Jig-rten mGon-po),* the founder of the Drigung Kagyu tradition, is said to have fallen so ill with *mdze* that he prepared to go into the mountains to die. But overcome by intense compassion, he saw *nāgas* leave his body during the night and was healed within days.[17] Another example is Tönyön Samdrup *(Thod-smyon bSam-grub),* the great-grandson of the eleventh-century female master Machik Labkyi Drönma *(Ma-cig Lab-kyi sGron-ma),* who during a meditation retreat was cured of *mdze* like 'a snake shedding its skin'.[18] This shedding of skin does occurs when someone recovers from an illness such as eczema in its severest form.

Varacandra

The name Walatsaṇḍa is a Nepalese or Maithili pronunciation of Varacandra, for in those languages *Ba* and *La* regularly replace the classical *Va* and *Ra*. An alternative could be Bālacandra, with a long first vowel. Varacandra, however, is confirmed by the translation of his name in some colophons as Dawa Zangpo *(Zla-ba bZang-po),* which also means 'Excellent Moon'.

The only accounts of Varacandra available to us are those that appear in Rechungpa biographies, and they only concern Varacandra's relationship with Rechungpa. Nevertheless, Varacandra's historical existence is attested to by the colophons of fourteen canonical texts that he helped to translate into Tibetan, and he may have been involved in the translation of at least another eight texts. This does not necessarily mean that Varacandra knew Tibetan, but only that he helped the Tibetan translator, which was Lenchung Darma Tsultrim *(Glan-chung Dar-ma Tshul-khrims),* of whom there is no information other than the colophons to his seventeen translations, and he is not recorded as having worked with any other Indian master.

Varacandra was a Vajrapāṇi master. He helped to translate two Vajrapāṇi tantras and at least seven Vajrapāṇi texts composed by Karmavajra, who was probably his own teacher, and are the very teachings transmitted in Rechungpa's lineage. Varacandra was involved in the translation of other works important for Rechungpa, namely, the Amitāyus practices composed by Rechungpa's female guru Siddharājñī.

Karmavajra, the author of the Vajrapāṇi texts, worked on the translation of seven texts with a Tibetan named Kumaraśila, also known as Shönnu Tsultrim *(gZhon-nu Tshul-khrims).*[19] One of those seven texts was by Lalitavajra, a pupil of Tilopa and therefore a contemporary of Nāropa (who died in 1040). This would make Karmavajra active in the middle to latter half of the eleventh century and therefore a teacher of Varacandra.

Karmavajra appears in Götsang Repa's list of Rechungpa's previous lives (though not in the list given by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal). This is because they are both emanations

of Vajrapāṇi; other Vajrapāṇi emanations—Ānanda, Indrabhuti, King Sucandra of Śambhala, etc.—are identified as previous lives of Rechungpa by Götsang Repa.[20] Although Varacandra is an obvious candidate to be recognised as an emanation of Vajrapāṇi he is never declared to be so in Götsang Repa's narrative, presumably because this would lead to the awkwardness of Rechungpa's teacher also being his own previous life!

Mithila

Where exactly in India is Rechungpa portrayed as going? Even if this early visit is fictional, it is the same area where Rechungpa practised under Tipupa. None of the versions portray Rechungpa as travelling at length through the Indian plain, let alone crossing the Ganges, which features strongly in the biographies of other masters such as Marpa.

Accounts of the visit to seek a cure from Varacandra do not describe Rechungpa passing through the Kathmandu valley, unlike accounts of his one definitely historical visit to India, which will be examined in Chapter 7, in which Rechungpa is initially prevented from proceeding beyond the southern borders of Nepal because of conflict with its neighbouring kingdom. At that time, this was Mithila, which lay at the beginning of the Indian plain, but has had a dozen names.[21] It was referred to as Videha in the Śatapatha Brāhmana before the middle of the first millennium BC. This name survives in Tibetan cosmology as the name of the mythical northern continent. The name Tīrabhukti has been found on seals dating from the sixth century AD.[22] Tīrabhukti is the origin of the name Tirhut, which was Sanskritised into Trihuta.[23] Mithila was one of a number of ancient alternative names, and is now the most commonly used.

The terms Mithila or Tirhut can refer to all the land between the Ganges and the Himalayas that is bordered on the west by the Gandaki River and on the east by the Kosi,[24] but, as a political entity, the Mithila kingdom was not established until it broke away from the Pala Empire in 1079. Rechungpa's contemporary, King Nanyadeva, accomplished this martial feat. He reigned from 1079 to 1147 and founded the Karnataka dynasty, which lasted until the Islamic invasion of 1324. He established his capital at Simraon, on the Mithila-Nepal border,[25] which is also called Simrāon-garh, Sīmarāma-garh and Sīmarāma-paṭṭaṇa. He then expanded his territory, invading Nepal in 1119–20.[26]

Götsang Repa is the only author to provide a name for the land that Rechungpa visits, calling it Dewa (*bDe-ba,* 'Bliss'). It is possible that it was derived from *bhukti* as a short form of Tīrabhukti, as *bhukti* can mean 'enjoyment', though *bhukti* here meant 'an administrative unit'.[27]

Götsang Repa names the town in Dewa as Patabasta *(Pa-ta-bas-ta),* but also as *Ta-bas-ta* and *Ta-ba-sa-ta,* which reveals the degree of corruption non-Tibetan names were susceptible to even within the same text. Cha Lotsawa *(Chags Lo-tsā-ba),* a.k.a Chöje Pal *(Chos-rje dPal)* (1197–1264) provides evidence in his own description of his travels in India, that this is in Mithila.[28] He went there at the age of 37, in 1234, and stayed there for two years, spending one monsoon at Bodhgayā and a second at Nālandā.[29] Ikhtiyār-

ud-Dīn Muḥammad had conquered Bihar and Bengal between 1193 and 1205 and bands of Afghani-Turk Muslim soldiers were roaming the countryside. In Götsang Repa there are no intimations of danger from Muslims during Rechungpa's visit to India for the destructive Muslim raids early in the eleventh century were long past, and the Muslim invasion, which was to prove so disastrous for Indian Buddhism, was a century later, and they did not overrun Mithila until 1324.

When Cha Lotsawa stayed at the capital of Mithila, because of an unsuccessful attempt at invasion by the Muslims the previous year there were additional guards posted outside the palace. Cha Lotsawa had an audience with Nanyadeva's descendant, King Rāmasiṃhadeva (1227–85).[30] Cha Lotsawa states that the capital, named Pata, was within easy reach of Nepal. When he left the area where Nepalese was generally spoken, he directly entered Mithila, and met many Nepalese there. He states that Mithila was twenty days journey at its narrowest,[31] but that it took three months to travel the southward route through Mithila, followed by another eight days to reach Vaiśālī,[32] and a further eight to Bodhgaya.[33] This agrees with chronicles that state that the previous king extended his territory southwards.

Cha Lotsawa gives the Simraon's name as *Pata,*[34] but it was known as Sīmarāma-paṭṭaṇa, with *paṭṭana* simply meaning city[35] (cf. Present day Patan, south of Kathmandu has Lalitapaṭṭana as its ancient form). Cha Lotsawa'a *Pata* is therefore presumably derived from an abbreviation of *paṭṭaṇa*. Pata is probably the source for Götsang Repa's Patabasta. The second half of the name—*basta*—occurs in Indian/Nepali place names, and is derived originally from *vasta* or *vastu,* meaning 'a site'.

The Blue Annals records that Maitripa, the Indian master central to Marpa and Rechungpa's lineage, lived in Pata hermitage, which corresponds with his having a large number of his main pupils living in Nepal or, as is the case with Tipupa, in Mithila itself.

The Blue Annals also describes Marpa Dopa *(Mar-pa Do-pa)* (1042–1136), going from Nepal to 'Tirahuta' *(Ti-ra-hu-ta),* and from there to Magadha.[36]

Gyadangpa Dechen Dorje: *The Life of the Venerable Rechung Dorje Drakpa (rJe-btsun Ras-chung rDo-rje Grags-pa'i rNam-thar* (1268–6))

In Gyadangpa's version of the life of Milarepa,[37] he includes the early death of Milarepa's father, the unequivocal existence of a sister, the building and demolition of buildings, etc. which were absent from earlier versions. Therefore, although there are Vajrapāṇi practices in the canon co-translated by Varacandra, Rechungpa's sickness and early visit to India could be a hagiographic invention designed to inspire faith in the power of that practice.

In Gyadangpa's biography of Rechungpa,[38] Rechungpa meets Milarepa and for the next few days brings him the food he earns by reading. His mother finds out from the patrons what is going on. Angered, she throws stones at Milarepa who decides that Rechungpa would be better off living with him, and so they stay together through the winter.

In the spring the mother and uncle forcibly take Rechungpa home to work in the fields. His ploughing disturbs a local deity that gives him an illness called *tsen-dze (btsan-'dze)*.[39] His mother and uncle then send him back to Milarepa. When Rechungpa tells him what happened, Milarepa tells him he is stupider than an animal, which knows to go from bad grass to better, while Rechungpa has come to him, though he is unable to help. Milarepa sends him away to seek help elsewhere.

Rechungpa goes to a Nyingma lama who has just returned from the Kongpo region in central Tibet. The lama gives Rechungpa a house to stay in. Another lama teaches him a protective mantra that he practises in a cave. During this time Rechungpa's mother sends him meagre amounts of food, but eventually sends a message that she is not going to send any more.

A little while later, three travelling Indian yogins ask him for food. He invites them in and shares his remaining food with them. One of the yogins, stares at him and calls out 'Tsiti dzola! *(Tsi-ti dzwa-la)*'[40] and 'Naga bhauta! *(na-ga bha-'u-ta)'*. One of the yogins knows Tibetan and translates: 'You have dze *('dze)*. You are being harmed by many nāgas.'

The *Demchog Nyengyu Biographies* edition has tsi-ti dzola *(ci-ti dzo-la)*. *Dzo-la* is a corruption of *dzwa-la* based on its phonology, as Tibetans normally pronounce a word with an 'a' vowel and a subfixed *wa* as 'o' when that word is a transliteration from the Sanskrit. The classical Sanskrit letters 'ca' and 'ja' are always represented in Tibetan as 'tsa' and 'dza' as a result of the phonology of Sanskrit pronounciation in the Mithila and Nepal area. A general Sanskrit transliteration of these words would be *citi-jvala,* pronounced 'chiti jvala'. As a double 't' is sometimes reduced to one in Tibetan transliteration, as in *satva* for *sattva,* it is possible that the spelling was *citti-jvala,* but both are legitimate spellings. In the medical dictionary *The Adornment of Yuthok's Thoughts (gSo-ba rig-pa'i tshig-mdzod g.yu-thog dgongs-rgyan),* quotes from the commentary to *The Medical Tantra (rGyud-bzhi'i dKa'-'grel)* by Palpung Ön Karma Tendzin Trinlay Rabgye *(dPal-spungs dBon Karma bsTan-'dzin 'Phrin-las Rab-rgyas), citi-jvala* is the Sanskrit for *mdze,* an alternative spelling of *'dze*.[41] *Citi-jvala,* which would literally mean 'the blaze of consciousness', does not appear in available Sanskrit dictionaries. *The Great Dictionary (Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo)* gives the spelling *rtsi-ti dzwa-la,* stating that it is a Sanskrit word and gives the Tibetan as 'blazing *mdze*' *(mdze 'bar-ba)*.[42] What is meant here by this word *mdze,* often translated into English as 'leprosy', has been discussed earlier. *Na-ga bha-'u-ta* is presumably derived from an Indic dialect or from a corruption of the Sanskrit *nāga* and the indeclinable *bahutaḥ* ('from many', 'by many' or 'from all sides').[43]

The yogins decide to forgo their pilgrimage to Mount *Wu-t'ai-shan* in China, and instead take Rechungpa to India, to their guru 'Walatsaṇḍa',[44] that is, Varacandra. Rechungpa is told to bring with him a 'ngabra' and a gourd for collecting pus and blood. The Ngabra *(rngabs rwa)* is made from the right horn of a red ox, five finger-width long and with a three finger-width wide mouth and is used for sucking out blood and pus from swellings.[45]

When they reach India and Rechungpa sees Varacandra's hermitage in the distance, he does not walk the last stretch of the journey, but prostrates himself and goes along the ground 'like a worm'. Varacandra sends the three yogins to Oḍḍiyāna and teaches

Rechungpa the 'Wrathful Vajrapāṇi with Garuḍa supplement' *(rDo-rje gtum-po khyung-sham-can)*. Rechungpa practises this for twenty-one days and then dreams that many people are going to watch his army fight the spirits of Tibet. He sees *garuḍas* chasing creatures into the sky, and awakes to find himself healed.

Rechungpa waits until the morning before going to see Varacandra, fearful of interrupting his teacher's night, because being Nepalese he is short tempered! When Rechungpa does tell him the good news, Varacandra upbraids him for having a Tibetan lack of dedication and tells him to carry on practising.

Varacandra's wife, on discovering that Rechungpa is a practitioner in a lineage derived from Nāropa, gives him cloth so he can make a gift to 'Tepupa' (the *Demchog Nyengyu Biographies* version has Tibupa),[46] who she says is a pupil of Nāropa.

Afterwards, Rechungpa, again on the wife's advice, accompanies Varacandra on two healing missions. In the first of these, Varacandra cures a queen by releasing a frog from inside a growth on her head. In the second case, he deflates a woman swollen from snakebite by making her blow into a chicken's beak. The chicken swells up, loses its feathers and dies, and the woman is cured. Varacandra assures Rechungpa that his powers caused the unfortunate chicken to be reborn in a higher existence.

Varacandra declares Rechungpa cured and sends him back to Tibet. In Nepal he hears that Milarepa is in Nyanam *(sNya-nam)* and so seeks him out there, at Tröpuk *(Brod-phug)* cave.

The story of Rechungpa's family is brought to a strange conclusion in an addition to the narrative designed to make Milarepa seem more caring. Milarepa tells Rechungpa that he had sent for him, wishing to nurse him, only to find that he had gone to India. Rechungpa's mother and uncle come for him again, even though the narrative has now removed Milarepa and Rechungpa to Nyanam, far from his homeland. Milarepa threatens Rechungpa's mother and uncle with sorcery and they run away, both out of Rechungpa's life and Gyadangpa's narrative. It is not explained why Milarepa did not do that to save Rechungpa from all his troubles in the first place.

Rechungpa makes a commitment to stay with Milarepa for twelve years. He receives the *caṇḍālī* instructions, and by mastering the practice becomes able to wear cotton only. Therefore he is given the name Rechung Dorje Drak.

Milarepa's limitations in this version are striking, reminiscent of the fallible version of Milarepa described by Gampopa. In Gyadangpa, Milarepa does not know the identity or circumstances of the child he meets. When winter is over and Rechungpa is needed for ploughing, Milarepa is unable to prevent the mother and uncle from taking Rechungpa away and he is particularly unhelpful when Rechungpa falls sick. In later narratives there is a diminution of these deficiencies in Milarepa and an increase in his clairvoyant and supernatural powers. However, surviving elements from this passage, which are ineluctably a part of the narrative structure, endure, causing problems in creating internally consistent narratives.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Rechungpa's mother is the principal villain and the uncle only a background figure in Gyadangpa's story, but future versions will reverse their roles.

The story of Rechungpa's sickness and cure demonstrates the efficacy as well as the origins of 'the Wrathful Vajrapāni with Garuḍa supplement' in combating sickness. Meditation practice as a method to cure illness by countering the influence of

supernatural beings is not at all unusual. This practice, introduced into Tibet by Rechungpa, is still used to combat various epidermal illnesses. It is known as 'the Caṇḍamahārocana Vajrapāṇi of the Rechungpa tradition'. This Vajrapāṇi is portrayed in *Five Hundred Buddhist Deities* as having three eyes and blazing hair. He stands, legs astride, upon two prostrate naked human figures, wears a tiger-skin skirt and serpent adornments and has both hands in a threatening gesture: the right holding aloft a vajra and the left resting a bell against the hip.[47]

Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara and The Golden Kagyu Garland of Railing

Nothing is said of Rechungpa's family problems, merely that 'in his fourteenth or fifteenth year he became sick. He went to guru Varacandra *(Walatsaṇḍra)* and was cured'. These texts are similar to all texts earlier than the third Drukchen in that Rechungpa does not bring gold to India, but they also specify that Rechungpa offered nothing but a flower in thanks for his healing revealing an independent development within the general Gyadangpa tradition.

The most surprising difference occurs after his cure:

> Then the proud young mantrika *(sngags-pa)* married [26a] Lady Sarnam Dalhapuk *(Jo-mo Sar-nam Za-lha-phug),* and was a householder for a little while. Then he became saddened by her and sang
>
> A wonderful and beautiful queen
> Adorned jewels, gold and turquoises,
> Offers me a throne and maidservants,
> But I have rejected them, afraid of long-term attachment.
>
> In his eighteenth or nineteenth year, he returned to lord Milarepa, received the *caṇḍālī* instructions, meditated upon them, and became known as Rechungpa.[48]
>
> sngags chung nga rgyal can gyis/jo mo sar ni za lha phug [23a] zhes bya ba cig blangs te khyim pa yug pa cig mdzad do/de nas jo mo de la thugs skyo ba skyes te/

mtshar la mdzes pa'i btsun mo la/
rin chen gser dang g.yus brgyan nas/
bting khrid khol mor bcas 'bul yang/
yun tu chags kyi dogs nas spangs pa lags/

> ces gsung nas lo bco brgyad bcu dgu tsam la/rje mi la'i spyan sngar phyin te/gtum mo zhus bsgoms te ras gon pas ras chung pa zhes grags so/

The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung editions, which are of a much later date, have some significant discrepancies. The opening sentence in the Palampur edition reads:

> Then he was greeted at the place of a woman, named Namza Lhayuk (Nam-za lHa-yug), who was the wife of a proud young mantrika, and was a householder for a little while. Then the wicked lady made him sad
>
> de nas sngags chung ra *[sic]* rgyal can zhig gi jo mo'i sa ru/nam za lha yug bya ba'i bud med [212] cig bsus nas khyim pa yug cig kyang mdzad do/de nas jo mo thu bas skyo ba skyes te[49]

The Bhutanese edition of *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* has a major haplography, omitting all words between the *yug* of the lady's name and the *yug* meaning 'a little while'.

The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung version of the song, which is identical in both editions, shows signs of corruption when compared with *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage*. It has *mo-btsun* instead of *btsun-mo* and nine syllables instead of seven in the third line, because of the addition of *rdzong-nga* at its beginning. The fourth line is nine syllables in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* and eight in both versions of *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung*. The latter appears to be corrupt having *spun chags gi thogs nas* instead of the *yun tu chags kyi dogs nas* ('afraid of long-time attachment') in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage*. *sPu* and *yu* are very similar in *dbu-med* script, and *spun,* meaning 'chaff' was probably adopted by the copyist as this is a common simile for an object of rejection. It also suggests that the particles *tu* and *kyi* were accretions within *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage*.

In *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung's* prose passage before the song, *bsus,* which means to come and greet a visitor on the road before he reaches your home, is suspect. The equivalent in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* is *blang,* literally 'adopt' or 'take up', which is here used as a verb for entering a marriage. *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* version is probably a corruption of another verb used with this same meaning: *bsdus*. It also seems unlikely that a writer would repeat the word *yug* so soon, such repetition normally being avoided by Tibetan writers, so that the lady's name as given in The *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* manuscript is probably closer to the original version, however obscure Sarnam Dalhapuk *(Sar-nam Za-lha-phug)* may be. The *sar* would have been interpreted by the *Ralung* version as an alternative form of *sa ru* 'at the place', thus necessitating a genitive after *Jo-mo*. It seems very unlikely that the

corruption would proceed in the opposite direction, and the *Ralung* sentence is peculiar. The word *thu-ba* (which does not occur in any dictionary, my translation 'wicked' is derived from the word *thu*) appears to be a corruption of *thugs* in the *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* phrase *jo mo de la thugs skyo ba skyes* ('He became saddened by that lady'), which is preferable to the *jo mo thu bas skyo ba skyes* that we find in *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung*.

There remains another problem. In the discrepancy between versions of the very first sentence in the passage we are examining, *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung* has a genitive in *sngags chung nga rgyal can gyi* while *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* has an instrumental in *sngags chung nga rgyal can gyis*. In spite of *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* appearing to be more reliable, the sudden reference to Rechungpa as a proud, young mantrika *(sngags-chung)* seems suspect. Rechungpa is never otherwise referred to as a *mantrika,* which means a householder-lama, and Jomo is regularly used to mean 'wife' in the Rechungpa narratives. Therefore, the *Ralung* version may preserve the original sentence, which says that he took up with someone else's partner. The alternative is that he entered into a *mantrika* life-style by adopting a wife and pride was the defect that caused him to do so.

There appears to be no precedent for this passage, or for specifying his age to be his eighteenth or nineteenth year when he returned to Milarepa (which would date the return to 1101 or 1102). There is the possibility that this passage is a narrative duplication of the ill-fated marriage later in his life.

The next part of the narrative accords with the versions that have him mastering *caṇḍalī* and becoming known as Rechungpa after his visit to Varacandra (i.e. Gyadangpa, *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Möntsepa, Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*, the third Drukchen (vaguely) and Pema Karpo), disagreeing with those texts that have this occurring before his sickness and visit to Varacandra (*The Blue Annals,* Tsangnyön's *The Songs of Milarepa,* Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, Götsang Repa and Śākya Rinchen).

Apart from *The Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage,* which is itself of an uncertain date, only two surviving fourteenth-century texts repeat this episode. One of these, *The Demchog Nyengyu Biographies* (compiled after 1360), repeats Gyadangpa's life of Rechungpa verbatim, without attribution.[50]

The Red Annals (completed in 1363) covers this subject in just one short sentence, but obviously accepts the basic narrative that Gyadangpa uses. *The Red Annals* states that Rechungpa received Vajrapāṇi from *Pa-la-tsan-tra,* that is, Varacandra, practised it and recovered from *mdze*.

We will next compare four works from the fifteenth century: Tatsak Tsewang Gyal's *The Lhorong Dharma History* (completed in 1451), Möntsepa's *The Life of Rechung Dorje Drak* (written circa 1450–75), Gö Lotsawa's *The Blue Annals* (completed in 1478) and Changchub Zangpo's *Saṃvara-ḍāka-karṇa-tantra* (a compilation made in the sixteenth century, which includes early texts), to see their relationship to Gyadangpa and each other in terms of Rechungpa's visit to Varacandra.

The Lhorong Dharma History[51]

This was written between 1446 and 1451 by Tatsak Tsewang Gyal *(rTa-tshag Tshe-dbang rGyal).* As stated previously, the earlier Karma Kagyu versions and Donmo Ripa did not have the 'leprosy' and Varacandra episodes. *The Lhorong Dharma History,* as we have already seen in its depiction of Rechungpa's meeting with Milarepa, merged those narrative traditions with that of Gyadangpa, adopting from the latter the 'Rechungpa as reader' motif. *The Lhorong Dharma History* summarises the 'sickness and cure in India' episode, but not always successfully.

The Lhorong Dharma History does not mention the passing of winter *before* the mother and uncle take Rechungpa home to work in the fields, so that it gives the impression that this occurred as soon as Rechungpa became Milarepa's pupil. The illness is specified to be a nāga-sickness *(klu 'i-nad),* which is the common way of referring to a *dze* illness. Gyadangpa's *btsan-mdze* does not appear again in any narrative tradition. On falling ill, Rechungpa is, as in Gyadangpa, sent to Milarepa, but Milarepa's lack of a warm welcome and his protestation of helplessness are now omitted. This creates a narrative jolt, for Rechungpa is next, for no apparent reason, suddenly receiving instructions from a Nyingma lama, who gives him a house to stay in. The two lamas who helped Rechungpa in Gyadangpa are here merged into one. *The Lhorong Dharma History* states that the mantra practice Rechungpa received *did* succeed in making him better, thus removing the implication of an ineffective mantra practice. The two narrative locations of house and cave given in Gyadangpa merge into one, the cave being eliminated. There does remain a shadow of the second location, for Rechungpa's mother, without explanation, forbids him to stay at the house and he leaves, though it is not said where to. Perhaps *The Lhorong Dharma History* interpreted the Gyadangpa narrative to mean that Rechungpa had been instructed to stay in his own home, though this does not agree with his mother sending him food.

The Lhorong Dharma History then has the meeting with three Indians yogins. One of them cries out 'Tsiti dzola!' *(tsi-ti dzo-la),* which is mutated (in the same way as had occurred in *The Demchog Nyengyu Biographies*) from the *Tsi ti dzwa-la*[52] given by Gyadangpa. There are no details of the journey to India, but it is said that he was cured twenty-five days after receiving the Vajrapāṇi-Garuḍa practice from Varacandra (*Walatsaṇḍa*). This might be a combination of Gyadangpa's initial twenty-one days with the unspecified time of extra practice after the cure.

The two stories of Varacandra's powers of healing are conflated into one. Varacandra cures a queen, but her sickness is not a growth on her head, but a swollen body caused by snakebite. She blows into a peacock, not a chicken, which dies.

Rechungpa is sent to meet Tipupa, but Varacandra's wife is omitted from the narrative so that it seems that Varacandra sends him. As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa is sent back to Tibet, meets Milarepa at Nyenam *(sNye-nam),* receives the *caṇḍalī* instructions from him, and becomes able to wear cotton only, though it is specified that it took him one year to do so. As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa makes the commitment to remain with Milarepa for twelve years and Milarepa gives him all the other instructions. *The Lhorong Dharma History* adds that Rechungpa became a master over all the other pupils.

The Lhorong Dharma History inherited textual elements from Gyadangpa. A comparison with Möntsepa and Changchub Zangpo reveals that they chose different passages or words from the same source. For example, in the sentence where Rechungpa's parents send him to Milarepa:

Gyadangpa has *slob-dpon* preceded by the second person genitive in: *da khyod rang gi slob dpon de can la rgyug cig zer* ('Now, run off to that master of yours!').[53]

The Lhorong Dharma History omits the genitive particle, making the second person pronoun into a nominative and replaces 'that master' with 'Mila': *da khyod rang mi la can du song zer* ('Now, you go to Mila!').

Möntsepa uses the very same phrase found in *The Lhorong Dharma History* except that he omits 'you' *(khyod rang): da mi la can du song zer* ('Now, go to Mila!'), which implies that Möntsepa was based on *The Lhorong Dharma History* or its source.[54]

Changchub Zangpo's compilation has the same line of dialogue by the parents, but it is transposed to a slightly later and ill-fitting part of the narrative, where they say, 'Go to your yogin!' *(khyod rang gi rnal 'byor pa'i sar song zer)*.[55] The phrase retains the genitive, omits 'now' *(da),* has yogin *(rnal 'byor pa)* instead of 'master' uses the genitive with *sar* instead *of can du,* but agrees with the other two texts in the use of 'go!' *(song)*.

Thus, Möntsepa and *The Lhorong Dharma History* have both—instead of Gyadangpa's 'Run off to that master!' *(slob-dpon de can la rgyug)*—written 'go to Mila[repa]!' *(mid-la can du song),* although *The Lhorong Dharma History* replaces Möntsepa's archaic spelling of *Mid-la* with *Mi-la*. Changchub Zangpo, compared to Möntsepa and *The Lhorong Dharma History,* has used used two alternative words. This demonstrates that these later three authors based themselves on the same material, most probably Gyadangpa.

Möntsepa's *The Life of Rechung Dorje Drak* (written sometime between 1450 and 1475)

Möntsepa presents a simplified form of the Gyadangpa passage, sometimes replacing words with synonyms. This reworking initially obscures the close correspondence between the two texts. He adds the following details to the Gyadangpa narrative.[56]

Rechungpa learns to read and count *before* his father dies, which makes his uncle and mother become more villainous, for they are merely taking advantage of his learning rather than providing him with education.

Milarepa states that Rechungpa's childhood is better than his was, rather than the same. This reflects an increasing emphasis on the uniqueness of Milarepa's suffering and achievement.

Milarepa teaches Rechungpa the mantra of Mañjuśrī. (This mantra is still considered good as an initial mantra for children, to increase their learning capacity.)

The day after their first meeting, Rechungpa brings Milarepa not just tsampa, but a leg of meat.

When a patron escorts Rechungpa home, the mother and uncle take the food he brings, but do not let him into the house. This saddens him and makes him think of going to live with Milarepa.

A lady patron (it is not clear if this is the one who escorted him home) accompanies Rechungpa, and offers Milarepa a turquoise, which he refuses.

The uncle, as well as the mother, because of the interruption of their food supply, come and break down Milarepa's door, throw stones at him and take Rechungpa away. This reflects the decreased emphasis on the mother as the leading villain in this narrative, for in Gyadangpa it was the mother alone who came and threw stones at Milarepa. Also, the stone throwing is no longer, as in Gyadangpa, the reason why Milarepa decides to adopt Rechungpa, for Rechungpa is already living with him.

There is no seasonal pause and no advent of spring before they take him home to plough the fields. Instead, Möntsepa presents the ploughing as work that Rechungpa's parents make him do as a substitute for supporting them through his reading.

When Rechungpa falls ill, there is a brief version of Milarepa's criticism of Rechungpa (in which he compares Rechungpa unfavourably to an animal) and the declaration of his inability to help him. However, oddly, Milarepa then teaches Rechungpa the Vajrapāṇi-Garuḍa practice, so that the Nyingma lama is omitted. This is presumably to offset the image of Milarepa as giving no help at all, but it runs contrary to the logic of the narrative in which Rechungpa remains sick and has to travel all the way to India to obtain this very same instruction as a cure. A further narrative problem is that, in conformity with the structure of the original narrative, Rechungpa goes to practise in another place away from Milarepa, but now for no apparent reason.

In conformity with the mother not being portrayed as the leading villain, the uncle and mother both declare they will give him no more food.

The meeting with the three yogins and the journey to Varacandra *(Wa-la-tsan-tra),* is simplified from Gyadangpa but with one addition: '[Rechungpa] could not travel, [so] he was sent [ahead] early in the morning.' This appears to originate in a scribal corruption of Gyadangpa's *sngams rus gcig dang* ('one sucking-horn and…') to *snga-du btang* ('sent early'). *gCig,* the word for 'one' is usually written in the umay *(dbu-med)* script as just the sign for the numeral one, and therefore could easily be missed.

Möntsepa relates that when Varacandra's hermitage came into sight, the yogins (instead of Rechungpa) proceeded by prostrating, and thus the final part of the journey took a long time.

In Möntsepa, Milarepa has already taught the Vajrapāṇi practice to Rechungpa, and so Varacandra cures him with 'water blessed by mantras' in twenty-five days, with no mention of Vajrapāṇi.

Varacandra's healing visits are omitted, but his wife remains in the story, sending Rechungpa to meet Tipupa.

After Rechungpa arrives at Tröpuk *(Brod-phug)* cave in Nyenam *(sNye-nams),* as in Gyadangpa, Milarepa says he has enquired after Rechungpa and, in spite of the narrative having now placed Milarepa and Rechungpa far from his home, frightens away the mother and uncle with the threat of sorcery.

As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa promises to stay with Milarepa for twelve years, is given the name Dorje Drak and practises *caṇḍālī* successfully.

Changchub Zangpo's *Saṃvara-ḍāka-tantra*

The biography in Changchub Zangpo's text[57] is a crude summary related to Gyadangpa, *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Möntsepa, and *The Wish-fulfilling Jewel (Yid-bzhin Nor-bu),* though the latter does not have this part of the Rechungpa story.

As in Möntsepa, the day after Rechungpa's first meeting with Milarepa, he brings him a leg of meat, but here the uncle comes searching for it and beats both Rechungpa and Milarepa. This peculiar addition appears to be the mutation of the Möntsepa phrase '[Rechungpa] brought it to the venerable one so that they both ate it (rje btsun la drangs pas/gnyis kas gsol lo)',[58] which in Changchub Zangpo becomes '[Rechungpa] brought it to the lama so that [the uncle] beat the lama and both' (bla ma la drangs pas/bla ma dang gnyis ka brdungs),[59] where the second 'lama' appears as an addition causing poor grammar.

It is not until this point in Changchub Zangpo that Rechungpa tells Milarepa his story and Milarepa says that their childhood is the same (and not a little worse, as in Möntsepa). Rechungpa learns 'the path of method' (a phrase that covers all deity visualisation and yoga practices) from Milarepa, and is then taken by the mother and uncle to plough. When he becomes ill, without the mother and uncle telling him to go to Milarepa, there is an abrupt transition to Milarepa declaring that he cannot help Rechungpa.[60]

Rechungpa then learns the wrathful Vajrapāṇi from an unspecified lama (which in Möntsepa he received from Milarepa). Thus, the Changchub Zangpo version retains the other master found in Gyadangpa but omitted by Möntsepa, though as in Möntsepa he receives the Vajrapāṇi practice before going to India. The Vajrapāṇi practised by Rechungpa is said to be with garuḍa wings *(gshog),* rather than Möntsepa's 'garuḍa supplement' *(gsham)*. In *umay* script *gsham* could easily be misread as *gshog*. This variation will also appear in Tsangnyön and Götsang Repa, although otherwise there seems to be no other influence. Changchub Zangpo, though using the same phrasing as Möntsepa, adds that the practice did *not* help, while *The Lhorong Dharma History* had said that it did.[61]

Rechungpa's mother and uncle send him a small final provision with the message, 'There is nothing else. Go to your yogin' *(khyod rang gi rnal 'byor pa'i sar song zer)*.[62] This is transposed to an illogical place from its earlier position in the other narratives.

Three yogins (as in Gyadangpa, *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Möntsepa and *The Blue Annals*) appear and their leader says, 'Tsitsi dzola *(Tsi-tsi dzo-la)*!'[63] in which *tsi-ti* has been corrupted to *tsi-tsi* (the Tibetan for mouse!) and *dzwa-la,* as in *The Lhorong Dharma History* and the *Demchog Nyengyu Biographies,* corrupted to *dzo-la*. There follows a unique variation: the leading yogin's statement that they are on the way to Wu-t'ai-shan is slightly changed so that they are coming *back* from there, so that Rechungpa's troubles do not interrupt their pilgrimage. Rechungpa's journey to India and his practice under Varacandra *(Wa-la-tsaṇḍa)* are mentioned briefly; simply stating that Rechungpa was cured in twenty-five days (as in Möntsepa and *The Lhorong Dharma History*).

Only one healing visit by Varacandra is described. As in *The Lhorong Dharma History,* the Changchub Zangpo text merges the two visits described by Gyadangpa into one: the queen with a growth on her head and the snakebitten woman are merged into a snakebitten queen. *The Lhorong Dharma History* and Changchub Zangpo are textually very close and therefore based on the same source. Where Gyadangpa has *smugs* for 'bite' (which is a common contemporary term in gTsang)[64], *The Lhorong Dharma History* has *brgyab* (incorrectly written as *brgyan* in the *dPe-rnying dPe-skrun-khang* edition). Changchub Zangpo, though usually retaining the more obscure word, has here used the more accessible *so-btab*. The unfortunate bird is a red chicken *(bya 'thsal lu),* whereas *The Lhorong Dharma History* affixes *rma* before *bya tsha-lu* (a variant spelling of *bya-'thsal lu* or *mtshal lu*) to create a peculiar, unattested word for peacock.

Rechungpa does not go to visit Tipupa, but returns to Tibet, going to Nyanang *(gNya'-nang)* as in *The Lhorong Dharma History,* where the area is called Nyenam *(sNye-nam),* and Möntsepa where it is Nyanam *(gNya'-nam)*.

Though this version of the life of Rechungpa appears in a text compiled in the mid-sixteenth century, it belongs to an earlier generation of textual development, akin to Möntsepa and *The Lhorong Dharma History*.

The Blue Annals (completed in 1478)

The passage is brief, merely stating that both uncle and mother complained about their payments stopping and that Milarepa taught Rechungpa the *caṇḍālī* practice. In the previous versions, that teaching was at a later time, but it is made possible earlier here because Gö Lotsawa's emphasis on dating rather than narrative greatly extends the passage of time: he has Rechungpa meet Milarepa in his eleventh year, in 1094, and not becoming sick until his fifteenth year, in 1098, an error that was repeated a few centuries later by Katok Tsewang Norbu, who compounded the error by dating the events to ten years earlier.[65] Gö Lotsawa wrote that Rechungpa became ill because he ploughed a field for his uncle and then went to live in empty houses until he accompanied three yogins to Varacandra and was cured by the Vajrapāṇi-garuḍa practice. Gö Lotsawa does not describe the return to Tibet. Thus, he preserves the essential elements only of the Gyadangpa narrative.

The two works of Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507)

A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra *(written between circa 1490 and circa 1507)*

This text's version of Rec hungpa's illness is a very brief version of the Gyadangpa narrative, but shows no evidence of using that text or any other. The story avoids the complexity of the earlier versions and creates a smooth narrative.

Rechungpa does not at first stay with Milarepa, but simply takes his reading payments to him. His mother and uncle disapprove of this and make him plough the fields instead

(without having to take him away from Milarepa). Thus the narrative is masterfully simplified and clarified. The illness is caused by a 'subterranean demon' disturbed by the ploughing, but the illness is not specified. Tsangnyön describes this event in terms of Buddhist practice—it is not simply a misfortune but 'a negative condition arising as an aid', for it develops Rechungpa's motivation to practice, and instead of Rechungpa being sent away by his mother and uncle, it is he who dismisses them from his mind and of his own volition goes to live with Milarepa, who adopts him. No more is heard of Rechungpa's family, who therefore do not play a villainous role in this narrative. Milarepa does not send Rechungpa away, but sets him to meditating. Therefore, the Nyingma lama is eliminated from the narrative, as is Milarepa's unhelpfulness. However, in keeping with the narrative tradition, Rechungpa still makes his journey to India, but it is described so briefly that it loses any specific characteristics. Tsangnyön merely writes, 'Many Indian yogins arrived and together with them [Rechungpa] went to the Indian guru Varacandra *(Ba-la-tsan-tra)*. He was completely cured from his illness. Then he returned to Lord Milarepa.'

Varacandra's role and Rechungpa's dependence upon him for a cure are de-emphasised in this version, which helps Tsangnyön's presentation of Milarepa as a perfect guru.

The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa *(completed in 1488)*

Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* contains the version of Rechungpa's early life that is best known to both Western and Tibetan readers. It is not the simple version of *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*.

The mother and uncle, because they have not received any of Rechungpa's payments, go looking for him. When they ask the patrons whether they are still paying Rechungpa, they learn that he is living with Milarepa and that Rechungpa is giving all his payments to him.[66] Thus, the narrative offers a reason for their anger towards Rechungpa, instead of just long-standing antipathy. Unlike *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*, but as in *The Blue Annals,* Rechungpa receives and masters the *caṇḍalī* instructions, wears cotton and is named Rechungpa *before* his mother and uncle take him home to plough the land.[67] He develops a 'land-deity' illness, but the awkward business of Milarepa's unhelpful reaction and Rechungpa's obtaining help from other lamas is entirely omitted. There is merely a brief statement that he went on retreat hoping to cure himself of the 'land-deity' illness.

The Indian yogins are five in number, as opposed to *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra's* 'many' or the three yogins in Gyadangpa, The *Lhorong Dharma History,* Changchub Zangpo, Möntsepa, and *The Blue Annals*.

The next part of the narrative is more detailed: it states that they eat the supply of food Rechungpa received from his uncle and mother. All five yogins, not just one of them, cry out 'Tsitsi dzola *(Tsi-tsi dzwa-la)*!' Oddly, the first word has the same corruption as in Changchub Zangpo, while the second word is the first instance we have seen of the original spelling in Gyadangpa being retained. The yogins are no longer on a pilgrimage to Wu-t'ai-shan in China, but only to Tibet itself.

In an exceptional addition to the narrative, Rechungpa goes to Milarepa to tell him of his intention to go to India, and asks him for his permission. There follows a song of advice from Milarepa, which is one of the genre of 'Milarepa songs' composed by generations of yogin-bards. Then before leaving for India, Rechungpa walls Milarepa up inside Za-ok cave. His stay with Varacandra *(Wa-la-tsan-dra)* in India is described in one sentence without details, and the practice is written as 'Vajrapāṇī with garuḍa wings' instead of 'with garuḍa supplement', which accords with Tsangnyön's approach to choose the more dramatic alternative.

Because they had not yet left the area of Rala and Milarepa is walled up in a cave, their next meeting after Rechungpa's return cannot take place in Nyenam *(sNye-snam)*. The narrative drama is heightened on Rechungpa's return to Tibet by his first asking about Milarepa's whereabouts in Kyirong *(sKyid-rong)* only to find that no one has heard anything of him for a while, which makes Rechungpa worry that Milarepa has died. He goes further north to Za-ok cave, and when he sees that it is still sealed, he is certain that Milarepa is dead. But on dismantling the wall he is overjoyed to find Milarepa still sitting in meditation inside. Thus Tsangnyön inserts suspense, relief, and also a miraculous mastery of meditation. The reunion is the setting for a well-known Milarepa song about happiness or 'well-being' on Rechungpa's asking after his health.[68] Za-ok cave continues to be the setting for further teaching and practice and is even said to be the place 'where [Rechungpa] attained the final experiences and realisations'.[69] This contrasts particularly with Donmo Ripa, in which Za-ok is abandoned soon after their first meeting for a series of specific locations.[70]

Tsangnyön's narrative brings Rechungpa back to his home area, but even so he resists the temptation of adding the reappearance of Rechungpa's parents and Milarepa threatening them with sorcery. Tsangnyön would have wished to avoid portraying Milarepa's association with sorcery at such a late stage in his life, and also avoided the thorny question of why Milarepa did not help Rechungpa that way in the first place.

Thus, Tsangnyön's *Hundred Thousand Songs* demonstrates more narrative invention and skill than his *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra* and is the version that became for later generations the unquestioned standard version of events.

After Tsangnyön: the sixteenth century

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (1503)

Tsangnyön's pupil, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, describes Rechungpa's early years in a concise version that does not entirely agree with either of his teacher's two versions. Rinchen Namgyal does not describe what circumstances caused Rechungpa to meet Milarepa, but he was not carrying any food-payments with him, for Rechungpa says, 'I don't have anything to give you today, but I will come to see you another time.'[71]

He agrees with Tsangnyön and *The Blue Annals* that Rechungpa practised *caṇḍalī* successfully and gained his name—Rechungpa—*before* his uncle and mother made him work at ploughing. The sickness is blamed upon a nāga. His visit to India and return are

described in the briefest fashion, with no mention of the number of yogins involved, and no details concerning Varacandra (*Wa-la-tsaṇḍa*).

Sang-gye Darpo

Sang-gye Darpo merely repeats verbatim from Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*.

The third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (1478–1523)

The third Drukchen, the hierarch of the Drukpa Kagyu, was a contemporary of Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal. His *Writings on the Demchok Nyengyu (bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud kyi Yig-cha)* version has a few additional details that we have not previously seen, plus some details from Gyadangpa that had been ignored by previous texts. The sickness is caused by a *lünyen (klu-gnyan),* which is a class of Tibetan spirit derived from the union of *lü (klu; nāga)* and *nyen (gnyan)* spirits.

The number of yogins that Rechungpa meets is four, not the three of earlier texts or the five of Tsangnyön. Their exclamation of 'Bhu-rna[72] bhu-hu na-ga bhu-hu', is clearly corrupt, though it is still glossed as meaning 'many *nāgas*' *(klu-mang-po)*.

There follows a striking deviation from the previous narratives. The yogins state that Varacandra (*Wa-la-tsaṇḍa*) is merely their neighbour, not their guru, and instead of accompanying Rechungpa to India they merely send a message to Varacandra that will enable Rechungpa to receive the Vajrapāṇi instructions.

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa reproduces an element from the early Gyadangpa narrative that we have not seen previously reproduced: Rechungpa takes a gourd with him to collect the pus and blood that drips from his body.

In all previous versions he went empty-handed, as one would expect of a poverty-stricken child, but here he takes three and a half *sho* (*zho,* tenth of an ounce) of gold with him as an offering for Varacandra; where he obtained this sudden wealth is not explained.

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa specifies that Varacandra taught Rechungpa the medium sādhana of Vajrapāṇi composed by Karmavajra, a detail that had not appeared in previous versions. Another additional detail is that while Rechungpa recites the mantra, his body's swelling decreases, but in between sessions and while he is sleeping it reappears. Gyadangpa said that Rechungpa was cured after twenty-one days; *The Lhorong Dharma History* and Möntsepa both said twenty-five days, but the third Drukchen lengthens it to a month. Unlike *The Lhorong Dharma History* and Möntsepa, the Third Drukchen repeats the dream described by Gyadangpa, though the *garuḍas* are said to be birds and the 'creatures' are specified to be frogs and snakes. Rechungpa is told in the dream that these animals are the *nāgas* harming Dorje Drakpa, that is, himself.

He specifically waits until morning to see Varacandra, though Gyadangpa's reason for the hesitation—that Varacandra is a Nepalese and therefore short-tempered—is omitted.

The response from Varacandra is also kinder: Rechungpa is not told off for being happy, only advised to enter a fortnight's retreat for protection against a recurrence of the illness.

The Third Drukchen's source does not appear to be the Gyadangpa text itself, but some intermediary text or oral tradition, for while retaining elements of that earlier stratum there are a variety of additions and omissions that modify the story. One of the additions is that Rechungpa is briefly described as returning to Tibet only to come straight back again in order to offer Varacandra a further three and a half sho of gold as thanks for the cure. He then receives the entire wrathful Vajrapāṇi (Sanskrit: *Vajracaṇḍa*: Tibetan: *rDo-rje gTum-po*) instructions.

This second visit to India does not appear in previous texts, though *The Red Annals* (completed in 1346) and *The Great Chronicle of India and Tibet (1434)* state that Rechungpa made five visits to India, but without specifying what they were. These visits are, however, as we shall see later, described in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara,* which was compiled after the fourteenth century, and *The Golden Kagyu Garland of Ralung,* which was compiled (circa 1799–1803).

The Third Drukchen briefly describes yet another visit that does not appear in earlier sources: a visit to Nepal and India in order to receive Vārāhī and Cakrasaṃvara teachings from Rāmapāla (written Ramaphala), Tipupa and Mahākaruṇa (Ye-rang-pa), who were all pupils of Maitripa and are identified in Chapter 8.

The Blue Annals will also mention another journey south, though only to Nepal, where he receives instructions on Cakrasaṃvara from Atulyadāsa and others.

These teachers will reappear in the description of Rechungpa's principal visit to India, which is found in all sources, from which originates the *Karṇatantra* lineage of instructions that Rechungpa introduced into Tibet. Texts such as the thirteenth or fourteenth century *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* describe that latter visit as Rechungpa's *sole* visit to India, while the Gyadangpa related texts that we have examined present it as his second, except for the third Drukchen, for whom it was his fourth.

Götsang Repa (1470-ante 1543)

The Life of Rechungpa *(1531)*[73]

Götsang Repa's version of Rechungpa's sickness is its most developed form, but inclusivity has taken precedence over clarity and consistency. It contrasts with Tsangnyön's approach, in which readability and smooth flow of narrative were the primary concerns.

The composite nature of this passage indicates that it is not a reproduction from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* written by Rechungpa's own pupils. We cannot even be certain if this entire episode features in that biography.

Götsang Repa clearly bases himself on Möntsepa's version (and not the earlier Gyadangpa), for he repeats portions of that text. However, peculiarly, Götsang Repa has Rechungpa bringing Milarepa food an unspecified number of times *before* his initial conversation with Milarepa, which is comaparable to Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal's

empty-handed Rechungpa stating he will come back to see Milarepa when he has something to offer him and only then engaging in conversation.

At the point where Möntsepa had Milarepa telling Rechungpa that his own childhood had been worse, Götsang Repa takes the opportunity to make Milarepa relate the story of his life in the version told by Tsangnyön in his *Life of Milarepa*. However, Tsangnyön's famous work begins by describing a time towards the end of Milarepa's life. Rechungpa has a dream in which he travels to Buddha-realms and listens to life-stories there and is told to ask his own teacher for his life-story, for it is even more wonderful. Consequently, on Rechungpa's insistence, Milarepa relates the story of his life, which none of his pupils appear to have heard before. This device enabled Tsangnyön to present the life-story of Milarepa as an 'autobiography' in which each chapter ends with a description of the emotional reaction of his listeners, giving the work a greater impact. It has also resulted in Tsangnyön's work being popularly attributed to Rechungpa himself.

Götsang Repa was devoted to the memory of Tsangnyön; he wrote his hagiography[74] and described the place of his death as a second Kuśīnagara,[75] thus equating him with the Buddha. Nevertheless, he did not take recourse to his guru's literary device, but used this more logical juncture in his narrative—the first meeting of Milarepa and Rechungpa—to tell Milarepa's life-story This illustrates how a narrative tradition is easily transformed by successive generations without rigidly adhering to an earlier, however respected, version.

Götsang Repa concludes his brief account of Milarepa's life with Milarepa's statement that Rechungpa does not need to undergo the same suffering as he did. This serves an important function in allowing the readership to be inspired by the account of Milarepa's life without a teacher or pupil feeling obliged to repeat it, validating the normal teacher-pupil relationship in contrast to that of the extreme legendary version.

Götsang Repa then reproduces a passage from Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* saying 'Owing to the power of good karmic tendencies and latencies from past lives…' in contradiction to his initial introduction of Rechungpa as a Buddha's emanation that had transcended karma. Götsang Repa's insertion of the initial meeting as described in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* causes him to repeat himself, for he states again that Rechungpa takes his food-payments to Milarepa.

At the point where the *The Hundred Thousand Songs* merely says that Rechungpa received teachings, Götsang Repa inserts some pedagogic material of introductory Buddhist teachings before returning to *The Hundred Thousand Songs'* narrative at the point where the uncle and mother enquire about Rechungpa and find that he is living with Milarepa and giving him his payments.[76] The uncle and mother, instead of immediately taking him away, merely forbid him to give Milarepa his payments, though he continues to do so.

Götsang Repa states that, at this time, Milarepa gave Rechungpa vows, the abhiṣeka of Vajravārāhī and the practice of *caṇḍālī*, which, as in the Tsangnyön version, he masters at this time. Milarepa also gives him the name Rechung Dorje Drak *(Ras-chung rDo-rje Grags)*. As described earlier, this contradicts the account from a few pages earlier in which he received the name Dorje Drakpa shortly after his birth.

At this point, Götsang Repa inserts Möntsepa's description of Rechungpa's offering of meat at the beginning of their relationship. As Rechungpa takes this to Milarepa instead of his parents, this betrays its original position in the narrative, for Götsang Repa has *already* established this change in Rechungpa's life.

The parents complain to the patrons and Rechungpa decides he has no choice but to take them the payments, so that he is again brought back to his earlier position in the narrative, and yet another version can unfold.

Möntsepa's patroness is now introduced, the narrative logic just about being held together by making Rechungpa refuse to accept her payment unless he can take it to the person of his choice. She agrees and, intrigued, accompanies him to Milarepa, who refuses her offering of a turquoise.

Another smaller *(chung-ba)* cave is introduced as a place that Rechungpa goes to live in. Continuing with Möntsepa as a source, the narrative states that Rechungpa is taking tsampa to Milarepa, who teaches him the practice of Mañjuśrī. This beginner's practice is now out of sequence, having already been preceded by Rechungpa mastering the advanced practices. It is at this point that Rechungpa's uncle and mother come for him. Still using Möntsepa's text as a basis, Götsang Repa has (assuming that neither text was the victim of scribal corruption) changed Möntsepa's 'first broke the door' *(dang po sgo glag [sic. klag]*[77] *byas)* into the peculiar 'first crowded into the doorway' *(dang por sgo la brdzangs)*.[78] This episode is then extended, for the stone throwing (now at Rechungpa as well as Milarepa) is interrupted by the arrival of some people. They return later, when no one else is present, to throw stones at Milarepa again and then take Rechungpa away. It is emphasised that this is primarily the cruel uncle's doing, and not the mother's.

Milarepa's unhelpful inactivity is left unexplained, only adding that, though he could do nothing to help, Milarepa had compassion for him, but Götsang Repa, having adopted this basic narrative, had no choice but to include it.

Götsang Repa provides extra detail concerning Rechungpa's ploughing. There were white frogs and tadpoles in a barberry thicket in the upper part of a field and black frogs and tadpoles in a peashrub and wild rose thicket in the lower part. They indicated the presence of a four-tailed, three-headed *nāga* named Pal *(dPal)*. People made offerings at these sites to this *nāga* before they engaged in ploughing, harvest or battle. Rechungpa's illness is first ascribed to his having destroyed these thickets. Götsang Repa states that Rechungpa became ill in his fourteenth year (circa 1097), in spite of having stated just a few pages earlier that Rechungpa was in his eleventh year when he met Milarepa. There is no room for the lapse of three years in this narrative, in spite of the number of events that Götsang Repa has stuffed into it. This temporal aberration reminds us of Gö Lotsawa's *The Blue Annals,* in which Rechungpa met Milarepa in his eleventh year but did not develop his illness until his fifteenth year. That passage, or one related to it, appears to have influenced Götsang Repa, and done so adversely in terms of narrative consistency.

Götsang Repa's inclusive approach is demonstrated here by a valuable record of two alternative versions of the cause for Rechungpa's sickness. They do not appear in any other surviving text and testify to the mutability of oral narratives.

One version is that a paternal uncle, who was a thief, had died and his corpse was walled up in a cave next to a spring that was the *nāga's* residence. Though Rechungpa was not personally responsible for this, upsetting a local deity by some act of pollution was believed to cause illness in local inhabitants. For example, in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* the Tseringma mountain goddesses, in spite of being devotees of Milarepa, cause death to the local population and livestock purely because in the previous summer some shepherds had lit a smoky fire that made the goddesses ill.[79]

Götsang Repa supplies another vesion in which a maternal uncle practised sorcery that had involved the burial of ritual objects in this place. Rechungpa fell ill because he helped his uncle by digging that ground.

All three versions have an uncle (whether maternal or paternal) that is a dubious character, and the disturbance of some sacred ground, but otherwise have developed quite different scenarios. It is uncommon for an author to include such contradictory accounts in a biography, so this passage indicates that many alternative versions may have developed that have never been recorded.

Götsang Repa follows Möntsepa in having the mother and uncle send Rechungpa to Milarepa, who is unwelcoming. We see here an example of how Götsang Repa, by modulating the text slightly, is able to cast Milarepa in a rather better light than his source did.

The Möntsepa version:

> [They] said, 'Now go to Mila *(Mid-la)*.' He went and the venerable one said, 'You idiot! Even an animal runs away to a pleasant place, but I can't help you in this.'[80]

Götsang Repa's version:

> The mother and uncle said, 'Now, go to Mila! Don't stay here!' Then he went to the venerable one, and the venerable one said, 'You idiot! Even an animal runs away to a pleasant place, but you have come to me only. Now I will see whether I can help you.'[81]

I give here a comparison of the Tibetan of both texts, in which the words in common are highlighted for ease of recognition. The discarded Möntsepa words are struck through, and Götsang Repa's addition underlined:

> ma khu na re **da mid la can du song** 'dir ma sdod **zer** de **nas** rje btsun gyi drung du **phyin pas/rje btsun gyi zhal nas khyod glen dud ′gro yang skyid par ′bros pa** ~~yin te/ da~~la **khyod** ~~kyi 'di la~~nga las mi yong ba da **ngas** khyod la ~~mi~~e **phan** lta yi **gsung/**

It is evident that Götsang Repa was not reproducing a source that Möntsepa had used, but Möntsepa's text itself. For example, Götsang Repa's addition of *rje-btsun* ('venerable one') causes a repetition that would have been avoided in an original text. At the end of this passage, the omission of one syllable, the negating *mi,* and the addition of just three syllables transforms the sentence from an admission of inability into an intention to help.

Compare this with the passage as written by the thirteenth-century Gyadangpa, which concludes with Milarepa's declaration of an explicit lack of ability, stating that he does *not know* how to help him.

> His mother and uncle said, 'Now run off to your master!' He went to Mila *(Mid-la),* who asked, 'Are you happy?' [Rechungpa replied,] 'Let alone

> being happy, they made me plough and I struck against a local deity and I have fallen ill with *dze*. Venerable one, protect me!' Mila said, 'You are no different from an animal. Even an animal will go from a place with bad grass to a place with good grass, will escape from suffering to happiness, but you go from happiness to suffering. Now, I do not know how to help you through [a practice of] protection; you must ask someone else who does know.'[82]
>
> der ma khu gnyis na re/da khyod rang gi slob dpon can rgyug cig zer bton/der rje btsun can phyin pas/khyod skyid dam gsung/skyid pa dag ci ma tshang ste/phru klog tu bcug pas/sa bdag dang thug/'dze yis zin/rje btsun la bsrung ba zhu 'tshal byas pas/bla ma na re khyod byol song dang khyad mi 'dug/byol song yin yang rtsa ngan sa nas/ bzang sa ru 'gro/sdug sa nas/skyid sa ru 'bros pa la/khyod skyid sa nas sdug sa ru 'gro yin 'dug pa/da ngas 'di la phan pa'i bsrung ba mi shes pas/gzhan shes pa cig la zhus gsung/

Götsang Repa, in accordance with his portrayal of a more helpful Milarepa, states that Rechungpa practised meditation instructions given by Milarepa for five months (first practising the *nāga* Apalala and then Vajrapāṇi), but to no avail. He does this in various places of solitude, not with Milarepa, so that the earlier stratum of the narrative can be followed. Many details that have not appeared in previous texts force their way in here. A maternal uncle takes pity on him and takes him to another area of Gungthang. There he meets a meditator who, through his practice of Karmavajra's medium-length *sādhana* of Vajrapāṇi with Garuḍa supplement, has the miraculous power of stopping hailstorms and preventing alcohol and curds from going sour. He teaches this practice to Rechungpa, although this is the practice that earlier texts specified to be the one taught to Rechungpa by Varacandra and which effected his cure. In Götsang Repa, Rechungpa practises this Vajrapāṇi throughout the summer and autumn, living on supplies that he has accumulated from his readings. When they are used up, he sends a request to his parents for supplies. His maternal uncle (now oddly limited in his help because he cannot interfere too much with the narrative that he has blundered into and is about to disappear from) gives him a little food. Also—so as to return to the earlier stratum of narrative—on the uncle's urging, Rechungpa's parents send four handfuls of tsampa with a message that they will send no more and never want to hear from him again. This plunges Rechungpa into deep sorrow. Then, one bitterly cold day, Rechungpa meets the yogins.

The extended narrative that has preceded this meeting has a number of ingredients thrown together so that the narrative drive is erratic and repetitive, and also tries to make the parents as villainous as possible.

The yogins to whom Rechungpa offers food are four in number, as in the third Drukchen's version, in contrast to Tsangnyön's five, and to the three of all other versions. *'Bhu-hu bhu-hu na-ga bhu-hu',* translated as 'many nāgas' *(klu mang-po),* is the exact corruption of the Sanskrit that was found in the third Drukchen's version, which points either to a common source or probably Götsang Repa's familarity with that work.

Götsang Repa does not specify at this point what practice the yogins say can be obtained from Varacandra for he has just described Rechungpa as practising Vajrapāṇi-garuḍa, so mentioning it now would no longer make sense.

We find a substantial amount of additional detail in what follows. The leader of the yogins sends the others on to Wu-t'ai-shan, and says he alone will take Rechungpa to Varacandra *(Wa-la-tsaṇḍa)* 'who lives near the town of Tabasta *(Ta-bas-ta)*'.[83] A few pages later, when they arrive, the town is called Patabasta *(Pa-ta-bas-ta),*[84] with the former probably being the scribal corruption, for as described earlier this is the city of Sīmarāma-paṭṭaṇa in Mithila.

On the yogin's instructions, before leaving, Rechungpa collects four *sho (zho,* tenths of an ounce) of gold as well as the gourd and horn mentioned in earlier versions, and some other provisions such as yak-hair pads for his soon-to-be blistered feet. The gold is probably derived from the third Drukchen's text where he takes three and a half *sho* on his first visit. 'Three and a half is expressed in Tibetan as "half and four"' *(phyed dang bzhi)*[85] and is therefore liable to be rounded up to four rather than down to three.

Götsang Repa then follows the *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* with Rechungpa going to tell Milarepa that he is leaving for India, Milarepa's song of advice, and Rechungpa sealing him into a cave.

After setting out for India there is an unexplained anomaly in the narrative for the plural form is used when referring to those travelling with him, which is a residue of the earlier version in which all the yogins accompanied Rechungpa.

The yogin is no longer the ordinary person of earlier versions. He makes the six-month journey to Varacandra and back during the passage of one night. He admits to Rechungpa he is a siddha and grants Rechungpa's request for a blessing.

When they arrive in the land of Mithila or Tirhut *(bDe-ba)* and approach Varacandra's hermitage, though Möntsepa had the yogins prostrating themselves the rest of the way, Götsang Repa has, like Gyadangpa, Rechungpa going along the ground, but no longer out of devotion, but because he is unable to walk as a result of his illness. This detail is immediately contradicted, for on reaching his destination he is back up on his feet again.

The hermitage is in a forest encircled by water and the yogin warns Rechungpa that to reach it he will have to undergo the ordeal of being surrounded by animal-headed beings that he must ignore, whatever their threats or promises may be. The yogin then transforms himself into a large blue (usually an euphemism for black) man, with canines like conches, three staring eyes that are as bright as suns, and four arms. After this transformation he conveniently, for the sake of the narrative, removes himself from it by flying away into the sky.

The hermitage is a small, square hut, adorned by flowers, in the centre of a glade that even during the night is as bright as if lit by the sun. Varacandra is seated inside. He is fat, three-eyed, with long moustaches and a goatee beard, and sparks are shooting from his red coloured body. Rechungpa offers him the gold. He tells Rechungpa that the creatures that surrounded him were guardians of the teachings and it was they who had sent 'the yogin' to bring Rechungpa from Tibet. The guru sings in praise of Rechungpa, identifying him as Padmākara, who is considered the most important figure in the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, and further lauds him as 'a jewel of the teachings', 'a lamp of the Dharma' and compares him to the long-suffering bodhisattva Sadāprarudita.

This version has undergone the alchemy of hagiography to the extent that it contrasts greatly with earlier versions such as Gyadangpa, in which Varacandra's first response on seeing Rechungpa is merely to say, 'What is this Tibetan doing here?'[86] Götsang Repa does retain some inconsistent elements from this earlier narrative stratum. Götsang Repa is at this point unable to avoid stating that Rechungpa is taught Karmavajra's medium Vajrapāṇi *sādhana* (even though according to his narrative he has already been practising it in Tibet). According to Gyadangpa, Rechungpa was cured after twenty-one days and followed this with an unspecified length of time in which he practised to prevent a recurrence of the illness. *The Lhorong Dharma History* and Möntsepa both say it took twenty-five days, while the third Drukchen specifies a month plus a supplementary fortnight so as to prevent a recurrence. Götsang Repa extends this much further in what appears to be a cut-and-paste job from various sources. First Rechungpa practises for twenty-one days (as in Gyadangpa), and then adds a practice of the garuḍa supplement for three months, during which his condition worsens as his body swells painfully. He loses hope but is encouraged by Varacandra, who joins him in his retreat for another seven days. Götsang Repa then uses material from the third Drukchen's narrative, stating that the swelling decreased during mantra repetition but returned when he slept. After a month he has the dream that coincides with his cure. There are a few more details added to the third Drukchen's version of the dream: Rechungpa is accompanied to the mountain top by Milarepa and an unnamed person; scorpions are added to the frogs and snakes being chased away by the birds. An important additional detail is that a great snake turns to look at Rechungpa before leaving.

When Rechungpa wakes to find himself cured, he is overjoyed but hesitates to see Varacandra because of his short temper. This is as in Gyadangpa, but the reason given for Varacandra's short temper is not that he is Nepalese, but that he is Indian! When Rechungpa does see Varacandra, the great snake is interpreted as an omen of a possible recurrence of the illness and so another month of practice has to be performed (in contrast to the third Drukchen's fortnight). Götsang Repa's duration of practice therefore adds up to about six months.

Götsang Repa follows the structure of a double visit to Varacandra as given by the third Drukchen, but makes the second visit more substantial by moving the second half of the first visit into it. Thus, on being cured, Rechungpa tells Varacandra that he will go to Tibet and return with gold, but that it will take about four years to accumulate it.

On Rechungpa's return to Tibet, he receives an oddly enthusiastic invitation from his parents to return home and inherit his father's wealth, but rejects it, as he is now disillusioned with worldly life. This reintroduces the parents, as in Gyadangpa and Möntsepa, but without Milarepa's recourse to a threat of sorcery as the cause for their final departure from the narrative. Such a version emphasises a more religiously correct motivation for Rechungpa and removes the narrative problem of why Milarepa had not helped Rechungpa in that manner in the first place.

Götsang Repa follows Tsangnyön with Rechungpa returning to the sealed up cave near his home. The anxiety that Milarepa might have died, which was drawn out by Tsangnyön, is omitted, so that breaking open the sealed cave is deprived of its drama. Götsang Repa adds (from Möntsepa) Milarepa's statement that he sent for Rechungpa only to find out that he had gone to India, even though Götsang Repa has already used Tsangnyön's description of Rechungpa taking his leave from Milarepa and going to India

with his blessing! Götsang Repa now repeats, from Möntsepa, Milarepa's threat of sorcery against the parents, even though that strand of narrative had already just been brought to a suitable conclusion!

These examples demonstrate how Götsang Repa sacrificed consistency in his wish to comprehensively include alternative versions.

In Götsang Repa, Rechungpa's second visit to India begins with Milarepa giving permission for Rechungpa to go begging for gold. It takes him two years to accumulate three and a half sho, partly through obtaining land from his mother and uncle, though we are not told what prompts their out-of-character generosity. Rechungpa sets off to India and 'quickly arrives' at his destination. Rechungpa gives two sho to Varacandra and one to Varacandra's wife.

In Götsang Repa, Varacandra's two acts of healing take place in this second visit, but they are different from the earlier versions. Both seem to be variations based on the swelling and snakebite found in the second of Gyadangpa's two stories, in which a woman had swollen up as the result of being bitten by a snake, and was cured by blowing into a chicken. In Götsang Repa's version, Varacandra first cures a woman whose body has swollen because she had washed a buffalo-calf's lungs in a river. The treatment involves a five-day retreat on a hill named Coba and the woman is made to face the intense fire of the concluding session. The second cure is of a man who has a snake wrapped tightly around him. Varacandra sprinkles water over a chicken (which does not die in this version) and the snake leaves the man.

Rechungpa subsequently receives not only the complete Vajrapāṇi instructions, but also *Buddhahood Through Hearing (Sangs-rgyas Thos-chog),*[87] which he is told to bury as a *terma (gter-ma)* that will be discovered after seven generations. This is one of two prophecies concerning the discovery of teachings hidden by Rechungpa, here presented after the fact. The second prophecy was 'fulfilled' by Tsangpa Gyaré *(gTsang-pa rGya-ras)* (1161–1211), a founder of the Drukpa Kagyu tradition, who while on retreat (in 1184, aged 28) is said to have discovered the teaching that had been secretly buried by Rechungpa called *The Six Teachings on Equal Taste (Ro-snyoms skor-drug)*.[88]

There now follows a peculiarly maladroit piece of compilation: Varacandra, after praising Rechungpa and prophesying a future pupil and location for his teachings, asks Rechungpa, 'Whose pupil are you?' which is highly unconvincing at such a late date. This is derived from the question asked by Varacandra's wife in the Gyadangpa version, which leads to Rechungpa's first meeting with Tipupa.[89] The wife's role is diminished here, though she is still, as in Möntsepa,[90] the one who gives Rechungpa cloth to take as an offering, so that he will not go empty-handed to Tipupa. That detail is derived from the early versions in which Rechungpa was indeed empty-handed on his first visit to India, and had not come with a supply of gold. In this version, he is empty-handed only because he has conveniently given all the gold he had left to Varacandra just before this conversation, which thus enables the gift of cloth to find a place in the narrative.

As in earlier versions, there is a brief meeting with Tipupa (spelled *Ti-phu* here), solely to create the seed for the events of the next visit to India. However, Götsang Repa expands this passage with a significant addition. Rechungpa becomes involved in a conversation with Tipupa's Tibetan translator, who is called Jogyal *(Jo-rgyal)*. There is no record of such a translator elsewhere and the entire passage is of dubious authenticity.

It consists of an extended biography of Tipupa that reveals him to be a re-animated corpse.[91]

We find in the biographies variant spellings of Tipupa, whose name is given as *Ti-phu, Ti-phu-pa, Te-pu-pa,*[92] *Ti-phu-ba*[93] and *Ti-bu,*[94] while he is listed as *The-pu-pa* in the colophon of one canonical text. In the biographies he is also named Ngakyi Dongpo *(sNgags-kyi sDong-po),* presumably a translation for Mantravṛkṣa.

In *The Blue Annals* he is classed as one of the seven 'middle ranking pupils' of Maitripa.[95]

In the Götsang Repa story, derived from Tsangnyön's biography of Marpa, a young dead brahmin sat up on his funeral pyre and claimed not to be a *vetāla*—a malicious spirit that possesses corpses. He returned home, but his family realised that their dead son's body had indeed become inhabited by another being, but did not mind, as his character was a definite improvement on that of their son. The body had been re-animated through transference of consciousness accomplished by the practice of *pumpmveśa (grong-'jug).*

In Tibet, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö's *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros)* son, Darma Dodé *(Dar-ma mDo-sde)* after being mortally injured in a riding accident had employed this practice, but the only available body was that of a dead pigeon. Once he had become a bird, Marpa instructed him to fly to India, where he alighted on the young dead brahmin and transferred his consciousness into that body. It is said that he is known as Tipupa because *tipu* was an Indian word for pigeon. However this appears to be an entirely imaginary etymology.

This identification does have the function for a Kagyupa practitioner of unifying the Rechungpa and Marpa lineages. It also makes good both the loss of Marpa's successor and Marpa's failure to receive the complete *ḍākinī* instructions by this extraordinary narrative device of embodying both the missing successor and the missing instructions in the person of Tipupa.

Concerning this story, Jonang Tārānatha (1575–1634) warned, 'One should be aware that many such accounts are actually compilations of falsehood.'[96] Tsewang Kunkhyab *(Tshe-dbang Kun-khyab),* the eminent eighteenth-century Karma Kagyu historian, wrote that 'the entire story is spurious'.[97]

In Gyadangpa it is evident that Darma Dodé was believed to have outlived Marpa. Milarepa, now an old man, tells Rechungpa that he has instructions that he can pass on to one individual only, and that Marpa had told him to teach them to Darma Dodé or an equally worthy recipient. Milarepa says to Rechungpa, 'Dodé has died last year, and now there is no one else who could be a worthy recipient other than you.'[98]

In the biography of Ra Lotsawa *(Rwa Lo-tsā-ba),* a.k.a Ra Chökyi Drakpa *(Rwa Chos-kyi Grags-pa)* which is attributed to Ra's grand-nephew, Ra Yeshe Sengge *(Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge),* Ra Lotsawa and Darma Dodé practise sorcery against each other which results in Darma Dodé's death in a riding accident. However, this takes place after Marpa's lifetime and Darma Dodé has no opportunity to practice *purapraveśa*.[99]

An earlier version of the story is found in *The Lhorong Dharma History*. It relates that Dusum Khyenpa *(Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa),* the first Karmapa, who appears to have often identified his contemporaries as the rebirths of previous great masters, declared Yonten Zangpo *(Yon-tan bZang-po),* who was at the time a child, to be a rebirth of Darma Dodé. Dusum Khyenpa states that Darma Dodé died during Marpa's lifetime, and that Marpa had instructed him to perform *purapraveśa* into the body of a pigeon *(ldir-mo)*. On

Marpa's instructions he then flew to the eastern land of Abhirati, where he was born as the King's second son. He renounced the kingdom for the last twelve years of his life, dying in his seventieth year. He was then reborn into an artist's family in Kathmandu, but died in his thirty-seventh year, to be the reborn as Yonten Zangpo.[100]

Though Yonten Zangpo was the pupil of many Kagyu masters, his biography is primarily recorded in the Drigung Kagyu school. Whether this is an authentic record of the first Karmapa's pronouncement or not, it shows that the Darma Dodé re-animation as Tipupa was not universally known or accepted within the Kagyupa tradition.

Gyadangpa does not specify who Tipupa's teacher was, but does say that Tipupa passes on the teachings of Maitripa, which agrees with *The Blue Annals'* identification of him as the latter's pupil. Montsepa states that Tipupa received instructions from Maitripa and also Ghayadhara *[sic],* who will be discussed latter.

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa (*'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa*) does not include the pigeon story, but states that Tipupa was born to Gayadhara and a female attendant of Nāropa's.

Similarly, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal does not include the pigeon story. Instead, Tipupa gives a description of his own family. He states that he received teaching from his own (unnamed) father, who had received it from Ghayadhara *[sic],* who was a pupil of both Nāropa and Maitripa. Lhatsun appears to make Tipupa of a later generation than that of Maitripa's pupils, perhaps to make Rechungpa's life overlap more easily with his. In fact Lhatsun states that Tipupa was a child when he received this instruction from both his father *and* his father's teacher, Ghayadhara.

There was a Gayādhara—the spelling in the Kangyur *(bKa'—'gyur)* colophons—in the *Lamdré (Lam-'bras)* histories of the Sakya (iSa-skya). There is a Gayadhara (without the lengthened vowel) who was a pupil of Avadhūti in the lneage of Virupa, the principal source of the Sakya tradition. He was a principal teacher of Dromi Lotsawa (*'Brog-mi Lo-tsā-ba,* 992–1072) and therefore the source of the *Lamdré* that is characteristic of the Sakya school founded in Tibet by a pupil of Dromi Lotsawa. This Gayadhara was therefore a contemporary of Nāropa and Maitripa.

The identity of Gayadhara presents a problem, as Cyrus Stearns has demonstrated. He appears to have been conflated with other masters, such as Prajñendraruci, who was the other principal teacher of Dromi Lotsawa. Prajñendraruci was a teacher of the sexual practices of Inadrabhuti and is much reviled in Tibetan religious history under such names as Atsara Marpo *(Ātsara dmar-po)*.

The seventeenth-century Karma Chamay *(Karma Chags-med)* demonstrates a weak grasp of history by conflating Gayadhara with Śraddhākaravarman, the teacher of Rinchen Zangpo (958–1055), while still crediting him with being the father of Tipupa.[101]

It is probably a process of conflation that resulted in Gayadhara, who was Dromi Lotsawa's teacher and therefore a younger contemporary of Nāropa, (circa, 956–1040) having his life extended as far as the early twelfth century, building up a number of names and visits to Tibet.

It appears that Götsang Repa fused together two narrative traditions. In Rechungpa's earlier visit, he is told the pigeon story, as it occurs in Tsangnyön Heruka's biography of Marpa, but later, when Rechungpa is Tipupa's pupil, there is no mention of it. Instead, Tipupa's father is said to be Ghayadhara *[sic]* himself, thus not adding an extra generation as Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal did. The obscure Candragarbha, who in *The Life*

and Songs of Shepay Dorje encounters the wish-fulfilling cow, is said to be Tipupa's paternal uncle, that is, Ghayadhara's *[sic]* brother. Paṇḍita Amoghavajra is said to be Tipupa's maternal uncle and Līlāvajra *(sGegs-pa'i rDo-rje),* a prolific author from earlier in the century, is said to be his paternal grandfather. This may, however, all be a later accretion of family to enhance Tipupa's standing.

Pema Karpo, though relying on Tsangnyön Heruka and Götsang Repa, appears to balk at associating Tipupa with the pigeon story. He states that Darma Dodé died of a riding accident in his twenty-first year, and that Marpa told him to fly to east India, where he should enter a young brahmin's corpse. Pema Karpo then tersely adds, 'Nothing more was subsequently heard of him.'[102]

When he comes to describe Tipupa, Pema Karpo repeats only Götsang Repa's identification of Paṇḍita Ghayadhara as his father. Pema Karpo identifies Tipupa himself as Paṇḍita Candrabhadra (not to be confused with Candragarbha, who encounters the wish-fulfilling cow), but with no intimation as to where this name came from.

The accounts of Tipupa being a child towards the end of the life of Nāropa (who died 1040) imply that he would be in his forties when Ma Lotsawa *(rMa Lo-tsā-ba)* was in India. Rechungpa's pupilage under Tipupa must have taken place no later than the first two decades of the twelfth century, when Tipupa would have been in his seventies and eighties. According to *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Rechungpa came to India in AD 1110, when he would have reached the age of 26 and Milarepa was 70. If this is correct, Tipupa would have been in his mid-seventies at least when Rechungpa studied under him.

Ma Lotsawa's *(rMa Lo-tsā-ba)* stay in India took place before his adoption of the 16-year old Machik Shama *(Ma-gcig Zha-ma),* who was Khönpuwa's *(Khon-pu-ba)* sister, as a consort in 1085. This accords with Tipupa being famous in the 1080s,[103] being a pupil of Maitripa (born 983/6–1063 or 995/8–1075),[104] and living long enough to be Rechungpa's teacher in the beginning of the eleventh century.

After visiting Tipupa, Rechungpa returns to Sīmarāma-paṭṭaṇa *(Ta-ba-sa-ta)* and Varacandra sends him back to Tibet. A new detail here is that he first receives instructions (on 'Garuḍa Wings') from a guru named Miti Khyungsho *(rMi-rti Khyung-shog),* a name composed perhaps of a corruption of *Smṛti* conjoined with the Tibetan for 'garuḍa-wings' which is itself a corruption of garuḍa supplement' *(khyung-shams).* Rechungpa receives from him the instructions for 'swift feet' *(rkang-mgyogs)* one of the legendary eight siddhis, and after a month of meditation gains the power of being able to travel swiftly, so that he makes it back to Milarepa, on foot, in seven days.

Before meeting Milarepa, Rechungpa receives *Mahāmudrā* and other teachings from three masters, and *Dzogchen (rDzogs-chen)* teachings from a Nyingma master, none of whom are attested to elsewhere. *Dzogchen* is described as 'the view that there are no deities or demons'. This simplistic and misleading definition is in fact just setting *Dzogchen* up for a blow that will be delivered against it further on in the text, during his principal journey to India. This is a residue of an antipathy to *Dzogchen* that is found in early Kagyu material such as Gyadangpa. The earliest example is in Gampopa's biography of Milarepa, in which (unlike later versions in which this passage is toned down) Milarepa's *Dzogchen* teacher confesses that these teachings are useless and he himself has gained no benefit from them.[105] Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude

that Gampopa was therefore hostile to the Dzogchen teachings. On the contrary, in his works, it is often mentioned along with Mahāmudrā on apparently equal terms. For example:

> In Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen, ones own mind's appearances are the 'light' or 'adornments' or 'great display' of the dharmakāya.[106]

Gampopa had evidently received specific Dzogchen instructions, for he incorporates them into his teachings.[107]

On Rechungpa's return to Tibet, Milarepa is said still to be at Za-ok cave. Thus, as a result of narrative expansion, Milarepa has stayed there for years.

Versions that post-date Götsang Repa

Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (1504–66)

A Feast for Scholars (mKhas-pa'i dGa'-ston) written between 1545 and 1565.

This major historical work describes this part of Rechungpa's life very briefly. It merely states:

> Because his mother and uncle made him dig in many sacred places he fell ill with *dze*. A yogin going to Wu-t'ai-shan became his guide and he reached India. The guru Varacandra *(Wa-la-tsaṇḍa)* taught him the 'Wrathful Vajrapāṇi with Garuḍa supplement', which he practised for three months. Though he became [more] ill at first, in the end special signs occurred and the demon of illness was expelled.[108]

The three-month period indicates an affiliation with Götsang Repa's work, which had been printed nearly twenty years before the completion of Tsukla Trengwa's mammoth work, even though in that text it was an *extra* three months. In conformity with Götsang Repa, a second visit is mentioned, but so briefly that it appears to be the same visit. Rechungpa offers Varacandra three sho of gold, which is a diminution of the three and a half sho found in the Third Drukchen and Götsang Repa.

In other words, this appears to be a not very skilful summary of Götsang Repa.

Pema Karpo (1527–92)

Pad-ma dKar-po Chos-'byung (completed in 1575)

In *Pema Karpo s History of the Dharma,* the story of Rechungpa's sickness and visit to India is told twice: in Rechungpa's own biography and in that of Milarepa. The Milarepa version is quite brief: after Rechungpa falls ill, Milarepa teaches him a mantra-repetition. Four yogins meet him and the eldest of them takes him to India. Before Rechungpa leaves he walls up Milarepa in a cave, and after a year in India he is cured.

All those details can only be derived from Götsang Repa. Even though Götsang Repa did not specify how long it took Rechungpa to be cured, Pema Karpo evidently added up Götsang Repa's list of successive periods of practice: three weeks, three months, one week, one month, and a final month, making approximately six months. Also, earlier in Götsang Repa's narrative, it was mentioned that the guide magically made what should have been a six-months journey to Varacandra take only one night. Thus it appears that Pema Karpo, relying exclusively on Götsang Repa and assuming it took Rechungpa six months to reach Varacandra, calculates that a year passed between Rechungpa's departure and his cure. No further visit to India is described until his principal visit to receive the *Karṇa-tantra* teaching from Tipupa.

The return from India and Rechungpa's concern that Milarepa has died in his absence is clearly derived from Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* for Götsang Repa had lost the dramatic tension of that passage in his retelling of it. But Pema Karpo retells the narrative of both texts in his own words, perhaps from memory, and never shows signs of copying directly from the texts.

One additional detail is that Milarepa cuts Rechungpa's hair when giving him the name Dorje Drakpa, which seems an anomalous detail in the context of yogins. Milarepa also gives him the *upāsaka* and *bodhicitta* vows, a Cakrasaṃvara *abhiṣeka* and the 'blending and transference' *(bsre-'pho)* instructions.[109] The source for this passage is Götsang Repa, where however all this occurred *before* his uncle and mother took him away to work at ploughing, and Rechungpa was taught Vajravārāhī, not Cakrasaṃvara, and *caṇḍālī*, not 'blending and transference'. The teaching of *caṇḍālī* would have accorded better with what follows in both Pema Karpo versions: the development of physical heat through *caṇḍālī* so that he can wear just cotton and thereby gains the name Rechungpa, although *caṇḍālī* can be classed as one of a set of 'blending' teachings.

A more detailed version of this passage is found in Pema Karpo's biography of Rechungpa. It is a summary of Götsang Repa apart from a few minor details. For example, Rechungpa's father is said to die in Rechungpa's eighth year, unusually agreeing, perhaps inadvertently, with his predecessor, the third Drukchen, rather than with Götsang Repa. When Rechungpa falls sick, Milarepa teaches him 'the Vajrapāṇi of the Len *(gLan)* tradition'.[110] Pema Karpo thus demonstrates familiarity with the canonical texts of Rechungpa's tradition (for which he himself wrote commentaries) the majority of which were translated by Lenchung Darma Tsultrim *(gLan-chung Dar-ma Tshul-khrims)* with Varacandra. This is in fact known as 'the Vajrapāṇi of the Rechung tradition' but such a name would obviously be out of place here. Other details, such as staying with a maternal uncle at Tseryul *(Tsher-yul),* there being four yogins and only their leader coming to India, and Rechungpa learning a language from him, are all derived from Götsang Repa. Even the variant toponym *Ta-pa-sa-ta* used on their arrival in India is the same. Similarly, there is a second visit in which Rechungpa gives three and a half sho of gold to Varacandra and meets Tipupa briefly.

As in Pema Karpo's life of Milarepa (and also in Gyadangpa, *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Möntsepa, Tsangnyön's *A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākinī-karṇa-tantra* and the Third Drukchen), it is not till this point that he practises *caṇḍālī* and becomes known as Rechungpa. This disagrees with the version in which this occurs *before* his

sickness, which is found in *The Blue Annals,* Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa.

Śākya Rinchen (Je Khenpo of Bhutan from 1744 to 1755)

This text demonstrates the influence of the Götsang Repa version in Bhutan, even though it is based on an identical version attributed to a Gade Gyaltsen. Śākya Rinchen also demonstrates a familiarity with Pema Karpo's summary, for he adds the detail of the Vajrapāṇi practice being of 'the Len *(gLan)* tradition'.

As in Pema Karpo, the leave-taking from Milarepa is omitted. Śākya Rinchen mentions periods of practice of three months, seven days and half a month only, the latter being written *zla ba phyed mtshams bcad*[111] although Gade Gyaltsen and all available editions of Götsang Repa have *zla ba gcig mtshams bcad*.[112]

6
SORCERY, LOGIC AND ANGRY MONKS

Introduction

Rechungpa's introduction of 'the teaching of the bodiless *ḍākinī*' (*ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma*; *lus-med mkha'-'gro'i chos-skor*) into Tibet is an important episode in his biographies, for this is the origin of all of Rechungpa's lineages, which compiled, preserved and elaborated his biographies. These narrative traditions were influential in the development of biographies of Milarepa, Marpa, Tilopa and Nāropa.

In the development of the Milarepa mythology, Rechungpa's character developed the role of a wayward 'rebel-pupil' and he becomes portrayed as secondary to Gampopa. We shall see in this chapter how Rechungpa's rebellious character is a fabrication gradually formed within certain narrative traditions.

The colophon of the lost *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel (Ngo-mtshar Nor-bu sNying-po),* as reproduced by Götsang Repa, reveals that Rechungpa's own pupils recorded that he studied under Tipupa in India. There are twenty-one available sources that refer to Rechungpa's journey to India to obtain the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma*. Of these the following ten sources describe his time in India in some detail:

1 (a) Gyadangpa's *Golden Garland of the Kagyu;* (b) *The Demchok Nyengyu Biographies*.
2 *The Wish-Fulfiling Jewel Garland (Yid bzhin-gyi Nor-bu yi Phreng-ba).*
3 *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar).*
4 Möntsepa *(Mon-rtse-pa)*.
5 *A River of Blessings (Byin-brlabs Chu-rgyun)*.
6 Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal)*.
7 (a) Götsang Repa; (b) Gade Gyaltsen.
8 Changchub Zangpo *(Byang-chub bZang-po)*.
9 Śākya-Rinchen.
10 *The Great Goldon Garland (gSer-phreng Chen-mo).*

The following eleven sources make brief references to this Indian visit:

1 The second Shamarpa, Khachö Wangpo's *(Zhwa-dmar-pa mKha'-spyod dBang-po) Clouds of Blessings*.
2 *The Lhorong History of the Dharma (lHo-rong Chos-'byung).*
3 *The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sNgon-po).*

4 Tsangnyön Heruka's Commentary on the *Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*.
5 Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.
6 The third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa *('Jams-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa)*.
7 Tsukla Trengwa (gTsug-lag 'phreng-ba), the Second Pawo (dPa'-bo).
8 Pema Karpo (Pad-ma dKar-po), the Fourth Drukchen.
9 Chökyi Döndrup (Chos-kyi Don-grub) the Eighth Shamarpa.
10 Pema Nyinché Wangpo (Padma Nyin-byed dBang-po), the Ninth Taisitupa.
11 (a) *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara (bKa'-brgyud kyi rNam-thar Thog-mar rDo-rje 'Chang gi rNam-thar nas Rim-par bZhugs so);* (b) *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung*.
12 *A History of Drakar Taso.*

The Gyadangpa version (mid-thirteenth century)

Gyadangpa's biography of Rechungpa jumps forward from the Varacandra episode to a time when he is the foremost amongst the *repa* pupils of Milarepa, some of whom express resentment towards Rechungpa, believing he has this status only because he was brought up by Milarepa.

During one *gaṇacakra*, when Drigom Repa *('Bri-sgom Ras-pa)* states that Rechungpa is the only one amongst them capable of composing a song of his experiences, Seben Repa *(Se-ban Ras-pa)* hurls his bowl of beer at Drigom Repa, and Milarepa suspends *gaṇacakras* for a few years.[1] This squabbling amongst Milarepa's principal pupils was unsurprisingly omitted, or diminished, in later versions. The song that Rechungpa eventually sings on this occasion is the autobiographical song concerning his present happiness that was discussed in Chapter 4.

Sometime later, Milarepa instructs Rechungpa to go to India to obtain the five remaining *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas*, which Marpa had not obtained but had instructed Milarepa to go to India to receive. Gold had to be collected for this purpose, for the teachings are not free. Patrons, on hearing that Milarepa needs gold in order to send Rechungpa to India, bring donations. However, they assume that Milarepa intends to send Rechungpa to learn the art of debate, for they had heard that Milarepa had been defeated in debate by Tönpa Darlo *(sTon-pa Dar-lo)*. The title *Tönpa,* which literally means 'teacher', is used in these narratives to designate a scholar, who is often, but not always, a Kadampa monk. The patrons plead with Milarepa that learning logic is unnecessary and ask him not to send Rechungpa to India. Milarepa informs them that not only is this not the purpose of Rechungpa's journey, but Darlo had in fact failed to defeat him in debate and became his pupil.[2]

This passage is a reference to an episode told in detail within Gyadangpa's biography of Milarepa.[3] It is an incident that became subject to much variation and development in the Milarepa literature. As narrated in the biographies, it is essentially an attack on the scholasticism of the Kadampa tradition, which, nevertheless, was an essential ingredient of the Dakpo Kagyu tradition founded by Gampopa.

Gampopa and Lama Shang, in their biographies of Milarepa, describe a conflict with aggrieved monks in Gungthang,[4] but it is Gyadangpa, or perhaps *The Kagyu Garland of*

Wish-fulfilling Jewels, that provide the earliest surviving account of Milarepa being challenged to debate and physically attacked by a scholar-monk. Gyadangpa's version is the earliest stage of this story's development and therefore the simplest and clearest.

Tönpa Darlo visits Milarepa, debates with him, loses his temper, strikes him on the head and throws earth and ashes in his face. At this point, the *rechungpas* wish to physically attack Darlo, but Milarepa forbids them. The plural of 'rechungpa' *(ras-chung-pa),* namely, *ras-chung-pa rnams,* refers to the group of 'junior *repas*', that is, Milarepa's pupils, presumably including Rechungpa. Milarepa sings to Darlo, who is soon converted.[5] This is followed by what appears to be a variation of the original narrative, unknown to all other sources, added as a subsequent meeting. It is introduced with the awkward narrative bridge of Darlo, en route home, deciding to return to apologise to Milarepa. He then anomalously goes through the procedure of meeting Milarepa all over again. Darlo is mystified by at first meeting multiple emanated Milarepas and is eventually defeated in debate by *paṇḍita* who then dissolves into Milarepa.[6]

The next episode in Gyadangpa's biography of Milarepa is his persecution by the monks of a monastery that he visits;[7] this passage is based upon the episode in Gampopa and Lama Shang, referred to above, but contains more miracles.

To return to Gyadangpa's biography of Rechungpa, in order for his venture to India to have the blessing of the *ḍākiṇīs* and thus be successful, Milarepa seats Rechungpa on a high throne, while he sits on a lower one. Milarepa then offers the donated gold to Rechungpa, in a reversal of the teacher-pupil relationship.[8] Rechungpa sings a four-line verse that asks for Milarepa's blessing and departs.

Therefore, in the Gyadangpa version, the only connection between the Darlo confrontation and Rechungpa's departure to India is a misunderstanding by Milarepa's patrons. Rechungpa is not in any way at fault. On the contrary, Gyadangpa emphasises Rechungpa's pre-eminence. Gyadangapa's Drukpa Kagyu School was an union of the Rechungpa and Gampopa lineages, and therefore one finds both these masters portrayed as being the primary pupil of Milarepa. Within the context of the Drukpa Kagyu, Rechungpa is the one who will eventually be demoted to secondary status.

The portrayal of Rechungpa in this episode was transformed over the centuries, and always to his disadvantage.

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels (bKa'-brgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi Phreng-ba) version

This particular version of the life of Milarepa is an independent variant in the narrative tradition that Gyadangpa appears within. It does not add an alternative account of Darlo's visit, and therefore is the simplest version to survive. Gyadangpa and this text used a similar source, each omitting different details. In this brief version of the episode,[9] two scholars, who were not mentioned by Gyadangpa, accompany Tönpa Darlo. As in Gyadangpa, Tönpa Darlo, angered, throws earth in Milarepa's face, but he does not strike him, an element that is also absent in all other versions, apart from one very significant version, probably from Shiché Ripa *(Zhi-byed Ri-pa),* which is contained in *A River of Blessings (Byin-brlabs gyi Chu-rgyun)*. Again, it is Milarepa's followers in general who

wish to attack Darlo and whom Milarepa orders to hold back. The song that converts Darlo is different from that found in Gyadangpa, apart from a similarity between two lines.[10] This is an example of the mutability of the yogin-bard tradition of Milarepa songs.

There is no separate Rechungpa biography contained within this text, and therefore, unlike Gyadangpa's biography of Milarepa, the story of Rechungpa's departure for India is told within the Milarepa biography itself.[11] It follows the encounter with Darlo, and before the account of Milarepa's miracles performed at the monastery that persecuted him.[12]

Milarepa instructs Rechungpa to obtain the 'five marvellous dharmas' *(ngo-mtshar che-ba'i chos-skor lnga)* from India. As in Gyadangpa, the donors of the gold erroneously believe that Milarepa is sending Rechungpa to learn logic and debate because of his encounter with Darlo, and they ask him not to do so. At the offering of gold to the enthroned Rechungpa, Milarepa explains the real purpose of Rechungpa's journey and sings a song[13] that includes an enumeration of the five dharmas:

1 Knowledge: the Lamp of Wisdom *(Rig-pa ye-shes sgron-me)*.
2 Nāḍis and vāyus: the cakra-network *(rtsa lung dra-mig 'khor-lo)*.
3 Equal taste: the mirror of externals *(ro-snyoms phyi'i me-long)*.
4 Self-liberation: the Māhamudrā *(rang-grol phyag-rgya chen-po)*.
5 Great bliss: the jewel of speech *(bde-chen gsung-gi rin-chen)*.

Gyadangpa had merely referred the reader to his version of the life of Milarepa for the song, providing only the first and last line in the Rechungpa biography.[14] However, the song is not in Gyadangpa's biography of Milarepa. Gyadangpa may have made an error. Or the Rechungpa biography was originally in another work. *The Demchog Nyengyu Biographies* is a verbatim repetition of Gyadangpa's work, and the error is not corrected.

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels version of the song has an additional three lines that follow what Gyadangpa gives as the final line.

There is a narrative detail, not found in Gyadangpa, which will appear in later versions: Rechungpa, having received the gold, casts from it two grains *(gser 'bru gnyis)* onto Milarepa's head.[15]

Rechungpa departs, but his return from India is not described. He is next mentioned, but only in passing, as being with Milarepa on retreat in a haunted cave.[16]

As in Gyadangpa, the connection between Rechungpa's journey to India and Milarepa's persecution by monks is tenuous. His departure is followed by an elaborate version of the conflict with the community of monks, which was briefly described in Gampopa: in addition to locking him in the temple, they now try to beat him, burn him and throw him over a cliff, but he proves to be invulnerable.

Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara and *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung*

These unique narratives are an independent variant of the Gyadangpa type and pre-date the narrative development of *The Life and Songs of Shepa Dorje* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. *The Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* is a compilation that

may date from the beginning of the fourteenth century, and is reproduced with some changes in the nineteenth-century *Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung*. It creates a connection between Darlo and Rechungpa's deparature for India in an unexpected manner. In its simplicity it appears to be rooted in a very early stratum of narrative development.

It specifies, as mentioned in Chapter 5 of this book, that Rechungpa was in his eighteenth or nineteenth year (which would be AD 1101 or 1102) on his return to Milarepa following his cure in India and his relationship with a certain Sarnam Dalha Puk *(Sar-nam Za-lha-phug)*.

Later, after he had mastered the meditation practices, an *abhidharma* scholar named Tönpa Darlo *(sTon-pa Dar-lo),* who is here said to be *a teacher of Rechungpa's,* comes to see Milarepa, bringing with him an offering, but is displeased by Milarepa's lack of reciprocal respect. Milarepa tells Darlo, 'You scholars are sharp with words but dull in meaning.' Darlo throws ashes into Milaepa's face and leaves.[17]

Rechungpa is not given any dialogue or thoughts. He is merely said to clean Milarepa's face. Milarepa tells him that there is no point in his receiving any teachings from these scholar-monks, but instead, he should go to India for a third time to resolve doubts about Tantra commentaries by receiving instruction from masters in the lineage of Nāropa, in addition to teachings he will give Rechungpa.

The *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* are not specifically mentioned. Rechungpa *is* pursuing scholastic studies that Milarepa declares fruitless, but the trip to India is not for that purpose.[18]

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje version

This represents a further stratum in the development of the Rechungpa legend, and it formed a fruitful foundation for later developments. Its chapter divisions and titles are very similar to those in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewel*. In both texts the Darlo chapter *(dar-lo'i skor)* is introduced by the title 'The Quality of not being crushed by debate' *(rtsod pas mi rdzi ba'i yon tan)*.[19]

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,*[20] the motifs of the resentful monastery and the confrontational monk-scholar have been combined. They are explicitly identified as Kadampa monks, and the fact that they are Kadampas is the reason why they are under the power of attachment and aversion![21] *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* or at least its source for this passage, was probably the product of an independent Nyengyu lineage, in contrast to the Dakpo Kagyu, founded by Gampopa, which had adopted Kadampa monasticism and scholasticism. This condemnatory portrait of specifically Kadampa monks is absent in both our earlier and in all later texts.

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* the animosity of the monks is no longer solely because of Milarepa's growing spiritual reputation. The monks of the monastery of Tengchen *(sTeng-chen)* in Nyenam *(sNye-nam)* refuse to loan grain to the populace during a drought. Disillusioned, the people give their offerings for prayers for the dead, and so on, to Milarepa, which excites the ire that the Kadampas are, according to this text, naturally prey to.

An even greater narrative development is that Darlo has asexually reproduced to create *two* scholar monks—Tönpa Darlo and Lotön *(Lo-ston)*. Alternatively, two

narratives with different names for the monk have been brought together in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. The number of encounters with Milarepa is increased.

This division of the monk into two allows the most negative aspects of the Darlo of earlier versions to be siphoned off into a character that can play the role of a villain who gets his just desserts, enabling Darlo to become an important pupil of Milarepa without having such grave blots on his record as having physically attacked his guru.

Therefore, it is Lotön who concocts a plan to shame Milarepa into leaving the area by defeating him in debate. He sends three scholar-monks (echoing the narrative in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* but here not including Darlo) to debate with him. Milarepa sings a number of songs (not found in earlier sources) that convert the three unnamed monks into pupils. The principal confrontation is therefore, unrealistically, displaced to many months later, in a new setting, where Lotön, Darlo and their followers meet Milarepa and his followers at a festival. There, they see, to their shock, the three monks dressed as *repas* amongst Milarepa's pupils. It is not explained why Lotön had not been wondering about their fate in the meantime, but this is characteristic of the many 'narrative sutures' that one discovers in developed biographies. The new units of narrative may have internal logical consistency, but reveal weaknesses at the points where they fuse with other narrative units.

Milarepa sings to Lotön, who, enraged, throws ashes into Milarepa's face (but does not strike him). Rechungpa alone, and not 'all the *rechungpas*', seizes a stick and goes to hit Lotön. Here we see the birth of an impetuous Rechungpa in the narrative tradition. As unrealistically as in a musical, Milarepa seizes Rechungpa by the arm and all action freezes while Milarepa sings a song to calm him down, until 'Rechungpa's fierce pride was pacified and he meditated on patience' *(ras chung pa nga rgyal gtum*[22] *pa zhi has bzod pa bsgom mo)*.[23] This song[24] is an important addition to the Milarepa repertoire and forms the basis for the presently popular variant in Tsangnyön's *The Songs of Milarepa*.

Rechungpa's character acquires marked defects in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* even though the text has its origins in Rechungpa's lineage. The chapters on Gampopa are also indications that the text was probably compiled within a Drukpa Kagyu context. We witness an increase in the dichotomy of imperfect pupil and perfect teacher, which gives an increased dynamism to the narrative. This portrait is tempered by the context: Rechungpa is still a pupil, and the reader knows he will eventually become a master and lineage holder in his own right.

At this point Lotön makes an awkward, abrupt exit, simply vanishing from the narrative of the day's events. As Darlo's doppelgänger, he fulfils his narrative function in a brief description of his fate. He runs out of merit and is rejected by the populace, dies, and because of attachment to a peacock feather, is reborn as a treasure-guarding deity *(dkor-bdag)* that the local populace make oaths on.[25] Thus, a narrative character guilty of aggression towards Milarepa is provided with a suitable doom, instead of becoming his pupil.

Meanwhile, by sleight of narrative hand, Darlo continues from where his evil variant left off, continuing the dialogue with Milarepa, but developing faith in him, and becoming one of his six 'ordained scholar-monk meditator [pupils]' *(ston bsgom rab-byung drug gi ya bar gyur ba cig)*. This entails receiving Milarepa's instructions and practising them secretly, for the *repa* and monastic approaches are presented as being diametrically opposed.[26]

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* the confrontation with the scholar-monks is integral to Rechungpa's departure for India, which is depicted in a detrimental manner. The intention to learn logic is no longer an erroneous assumption made by the patrons. Rechungpa *himself,* worried about their being embarrassed by defeat in debate, privately decides to go to India to learn logic and debate. This makes little narrative sense, for there was no need to go to India for such a reason: he could have obtained this teaching in his own language in Tibet. However, this provides an opportunity for Milarepa's strong condemnation of the study of logic, identifying it as an obstacle to Buddhahood and condemning the wish to engage in debate as attributable to the *Māras*.[27] Rechungpa's response to this rebuke, oddly, is to sing, to Milarepa's satisfaction, the autobiographical song concerning his present happiness, which in Gyadangpa had occurred earlier in the narrative, following inter-pupillary conflict at the *gaṇacakra.*

The narrative flow appears to be damaged, as no explanation is at first given as to why gold is being collected and offered to Rechungpa.[28] The high throne for Rechungpa is omitted, and entrusting him with gold is without any formal demonstration of Rechungpa's status.[29] The illustrated Newark manuscript as a result portrays him sitting lower than Milarepa. Milarepa sings a variant of the song in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* that lists the five *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas,*[30] and includes, belatedly, for the first time in this narrative, the admonition to go to India to obtain them.

Rechungpa throws a slightly increased amount of gold onto Milarepa's head (in comparison to *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels*): one small piece *(theg po cig)*. He then sings his song asking for Milarepa's blessing for the journey, which was but a four-line verse in Gyadangpa and absent in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewel*. Here, while retaining the first two lines, it increases to eighteen lines, an example of the development of songs attributed to Rechungpa.[31]

Following a further warning against logic, Rechungpa is belatedly given the reason why he is being asked to obtain the five *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas.*[32] In *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* version of the Milarepa song that preceded Rechungpa's, he sang—*da na so rgas pas ma thon gyis:* 'I did not do so because of my old age.' These distinctive words are repeated in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but in the prose following Rechungpa's song, with just a change of the instrumental particle *(da na so rgas pas ma thon pas)*.

Milarepa sings an additional song of general advice, which could have been located anywhere in the biography, and Rechungpa departs for India. *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* in spite of being a biography of Milarepa and tarnishing Rechungpa's image, follows him to India for an entire chapter, rather than staying with Milarepa. This is because of the central importance of the introduction of the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* for the Nyengyu tradition, which was the background to this text, and which was of central importance to the Drukpa Kagyu. Tsangnyön Heruka, in spite of a similar background, omits this and other Rechungpa episodes, in spite of this causing a lack of smoothness in the flow of his story, as we shall see later on.

Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*

Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's (1350–1405) version of this episode in his *Clouds of Blessings*[33] represents a different narrative branch to that of the three texts we have just examined. In general, it is akin to the early Donmo Ripa version of circa 1245, which, however, does not include this episode.

As in Donmo Ripa, but not as in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa meets Milarepa *before* the latter is snowed in upon Lachi *(La-phyi)* Mountain.[34] As in Donmo Ripa, there is no conflict between Milarepa and any community of monks. Therefore, unlike *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* (but as in Gyadangpa and *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels*) Milarepa's instruction to Rechungpa to obtain the five *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* is a straightforward assignation to a chosen pupil. The passage is given in brief, without songs. However, Shamarpa says there are four *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* that have to be obtained, and not five as in the previous three texts, so that five of the nine have already brought to Tibet by Marpa.[35] The text does not specify what these four *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* are.

This undramatic version continued amongst more sober authors even while dramatic hagiographies were evolving.

The Lhorong History of the Dharma (lHo-rong Chos-'byung) (completed 1446)

Tatsak Tsewang Gyal *(rTa-tshag Tshe-dbang-rgyal)* provides a chronology for Milarepa's life, in which, as in the Shamarpa's *Clouds of Blessings,* Milarepa is snowed in at Lachi Mountain[36] *after* sending Rechungpa to India for the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma* (their number is not specified).[37]

As in Shamarpa's *Clouds of Blessings,* Rechungpa's journey to India is in no way attributed to an intention to study logic, and the scholar-monks are not mentioned.

The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sNgon-po) (completed 1478)

Gö Lotsawa ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) makes no reference to a conflict with monks, and, as in *Clouds of Blessings,* Rechungpa is sent to obtain the remaining four, not five, of the nine 'bodiless ḍākiṇī dharmas'.[38]

Möntsepa (circa 1450–75)

In Möntsepa, we find the Gyadangpa type narrative in a crudely simplified form, without the narrative developments of *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

Möntsepa reproduces Gyadangpa's chapter divisions exactly and the text itself often follows Gyadangpa closely. However, it gives a milder version of Seben Repa's futile rivalry with Rechungpa. Following a complaint that Rechungpa is favoured only because he was brought up by Milarepa, Seben and others fail to arrange a complex *gaṇacakra*, and Rechungpa is established to be the only one of Milarepa's pupils who can. As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa is also the only one able to sing of his experiences. Seben Repa's beer throwing is noticeable by its absence.[39]

Möntsepa even follows Gyadangpa in merely giving the last line of the song in which Milarepa instructs Rechungpa to go to India. As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa is sent to obtain five *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas*.

The conflict with scholar-monks is omitted, appearing neither in Möntsepa's biography of Milarepa or of Rechungpa, perhaps because the episode was unpalatable to an audience of scholar-monks.

Milarepa asks Rechungpa to obtain an additional teaching: 'the instructions that bring Buddhahood through the power of their being heard' *(gdams ngag thos pa'i stobs gyis sangs rgya ba)*.[40] This latter instruction is included in the narrative because by Möntsepa's time it had been discovered as a *Terma (gter-ma)* said to have been concealed by Rechungpa, so it is here projected back into the history, where it had not previously appeared. However, Möntsepa omitted to add it to list of teachings that Rechungpa eventually receives in India.

Tmöntsepa does not describe the collection of gold and also omits Milarepa offering it to Rechungpa on a high throne. However, it is said that Rechungpa places 'a little gold' *(gser en tsam)* on Milarepa's head. This is followed by a prose version of Gyadangpa's four line song in which Rechungpa asks for blessing.[41] And then Rechungpa leaves for India.

A River of Blessings (Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun)

A River of Blessings is principally based upon *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and that text's version of the confrontation with scholar-monks is repeated here.[42] However, it is preceded by an alternative version, presented as an additional, earlier event. This passage is probably from Shiché Ripa. It has archaic colloquialism and roots going back to the Gyadangpa and *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels*.[43]

In this passage, three monks named Galo *(dGa'-lo),* Ralo *(Ra-lo),* and Shinglo *(Shing-lo)* live in a Kadampa monastery in Nyenam *(sNye-nam)*. These three peculiar names may originate from Darlo, and are related to the narrative motif, first seen in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* of Milarepa's being challenged by three monks.

This episode begins with the monks' refusal to provide a loan of grain to the villagers, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but then Milarepa sends Rechungpa to wait for the returning villagers at a crossroad and to invite them to his cave with the promise of providing them with grain. Rechungpa, though he knows that they have no grain to give, dutifully obeys his guru. The villagers also, are well aware that Milarepa has no store of food, but decide they will come to see him anyway. Rechungpa arrives ahead of them, to warn Milarepa they are coming. Milarepa tells Rechungpa to make three heaps of earth and stones, which Milarepa proceeds to transform into even greater mounds of barley. He then transforms water into delicious beer, and changes other heaps into tsampa-dough and sweet-buckwheat, so that the villagers are provided with plenty of free food.[44]

Annoyed by this, Galo, Ralo and Shinglo send three anonymous monks to Milarepa, instead of going themselves, to debate with him and thereby drive him away, but the three monks develop faith in him instead and return to the monastery with that news.[45] The next day, Galo (the other two monks vanish from the narrative) comes to physically attack Milarepa (a physical blow on Milarepa, apart from just throwing dirt on him, is something we have only seen in Gyadangpa). The clairvoyant Milarepa knew of Galo's intention, and in order to prevent trouble, sends Rechungpa to collect firewood. Galo arrives, throws ashes into Milarepa's face and beats him with a staff until he is too tired to continue. The battered Milarepa then warns Galo to leave before Rechungpa returns or he will find himself on the receiving end of Rechungpa's blows. Galo leaves and Rechungpa returns to discover Milarepa totally covered in bruises, bleeding and weak. Milarepa has to dissuade Rechungpa from running after the monk.

No other work has adopted this episode, probably as it would undermine a portrait of an invulnerable Milarepa who never comes to harm (except when he wishes to, as in Tsangnyön's version of his death, when he deliberately consumes a poisoned dish, and yet does not suffer the physical agony that a normal human being would).

In this (presumably Shiché Ripa) part of the text we also find a distinctive approach to the subject of sorcery: Rechungpa, deeply upset by Galo's attack, pleads with Milarepa to practice sorcery against the monk (whose name from this point on is spelt *rGa-lo* instead of *dGa'-lo*) and cause his death.[46] Milarepa agrees, but later Rechungpa discovers Milarepa performing the life-lengthening practice of Amitāyus! Milarepa explains to the confused Rechungpa that this is 'profound sorcery' because by it they will outlive the monk, who will therefore die before they do! Rechungpa, dissatisfied, declares that he is going to go to India to learn sorcery himself. Thus is introduced an alternative motive for his visit to India, though there would be no need for Rechungpa to go to India to learn either sorcery or logic.

Milarepa gives Rechungpa permission to go to India, but only in order to obtain the remaining four (the number of *dharmas* agreeing with Shamarpa's *The Cloud of Blessings* and related texts) *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas*. Then, in an unique piece of narrative, Milarepa advises Rechungpa that if he *does* learn sorcery while in India, he should not practise it there, because though it would be effective over a long distance, people would not believe that Rechungpa was responsible for the resulting calamity that befalls Galo. Instead, he should wait until he returns to Tibet, for then he will become famous for his sorcery!

This narrative, in its independent form, must have continued at this point with Rechungpa's departure. However, *A River of Blessings* returns to *The Life and Songs of*

Shepay Dorje version, so that a confrontation re-commences, but this time with Lotön and Darlo. The initial visit of the three scholar-monks and the festival are omitted, but otherwise *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* text is followed closely. Instead of meeting at the festival, Lotön and Darlo come from Tengchen *(sTeng-chen)* monastery to see Milarepa in his cave. The dialogue and songs are almost identical. It is added, however, that when Rechungpa is prevented from attacking Lotön by Milarepa's song, the Nyenam patrons, who are observing the action, comment that Lotön was at fault, but Rechungpa was blameless.

This episode continues to its conclusion as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* with Rechungpa asking for permission to go to India so that he will be able to debate with these monks in the future. Similarly, there follows Milarepa's objections to logic, the gift of gold and Rechungpa's departure, though with an additional song from Milarepa wishing for Rechungpa's good fortune.[47] There is an additional sentence in which Rechungpa states that he is going to India to learn sorcery, because of the physical attacks by Galo *(rGa-lo)* and Lotön.[48] Here, the compiler of *A River of Blessings* has attempted to blend the two versions of Rechungpa's motivation into one whole, although the narrative sutures remain evident.

Tsangnyön Heruka's works

A Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra

In this earlier work, Tsangnyön merely states that Milarepa sent Rechungpa to India for the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma*, 'the dharmas of the bodyless ḍākinīs', without any further information.

Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* (completed in 1488)

This is the most popular version of the episode.[49] The essential narrative is at first almost identical to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* upon which it is based. Although there is some verbatim textual replication, the whole narrative is transmuted by Tsangnyön's literary talent, with his interpolation of new material and rephrasing of older material. Though he created a more accessible and enjoyable story, the narrative reaches its most complex form as a result of successive layers of narrative addition.

The two leaders of the monastery in Nyanang (*gNya'-nang,* which is Tsangnyön's version of the name for this area) are given expanded names: Lotön is Lotön Gendun Bum *(Lo-ston dGe-'dun'Bum)* and Darlo is Ratön Darma Lodrö *(Ra-ston Dar-ma Blo-gros),* which is Darlo, *(Dar-blo)* in its short form. This spelling of Darlo appeared in the introductory root verse of Gyadangpa[50] but only once in the main body of the text.[51] It is more likely that *Dar-lo* would be corrupted to *Dar-blo,* which could be understood as an abbreviation of a name (Tibetan names are abbreviated by retaining the first syllable of

each name), than that *Dar-blo* would be changed to a comparatively peculiar *Dar-lo*. Therefore, the name *Dar-blo* may have suggested Tsangnyön's Darma Lodrö *(Dar-ma Blo-gros)* so that the abbreviation, in a reverse process, created the full name.

The first significant innovation appears when the narrative reaches the festival, where Lotön and Darlo see the three scholar-monks they sent dressed as *repas* (with the added detail of their drinking alcohol from skull-bowls). In a surprising exchange of roles, perhaps echoing the Gyadangpa version, it is Darlo, not Latön, who throws earth at Milarepa. Rechungpa's response is stronger than in earlier versions, for he believes it will be a 'root-downfall' *(rtsa-ltung)* of the *mantrayāna* vows if he does not slay this sinner, and an accumulation of merit if he does. The word used for 'slay' is a specific *mantrayāna* term for killing those who deserve to be killed—*bsgral*[52] (though Chang translated this as 'punished',[53] presumably loath to believe that Rechungpa had murder in mind). Rechungpa thinks of Darlo as 'one who has the sin of working against the [guru's] body' *(sku la bsdo ba'i sdig can),* a peculiar phrase, but it uses the very term that appears in the standard Tantric list of the ten attributes of one who deserves to be slain. His response is in fact quite orthodox from a *mantrayāna* point of view. This is not simply a heated barroom (or festival) brawl.

Although *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* and *A River of Blessings* appear to be quite independent variations based on *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* yet they both have somewhat similar, minor additions to this passage, which appear to indicate either an alternative as yet unidentified common source or a very marginal influence of one text upon the other. In *A River of Blessings,* the populace were said to consider Rechungpa blameless in his action, while in *The Hunfred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* the patrons not only fault the monk, but also criticise Rechungpa 'a little'. This less favourable description of Rechungpa corresponds to Tsangnyön's portrayal of Rechungpa as more flawed than in the works of his predecessors.

This is followed by the indication of a narrative suture, for the festival episode ends unresolved and is followed by Darlo and Lotön visiting Milarepa, bringing an offering of meat and debating with him in yet another variation that is presented as an additional encounter.

In response to their debate, Milarepa sings and performs a sequence of miracles such as riding rocks, wading in the ground, solidifying space, etc. with the result that Lotön develops faith in him.

Darlo, being marked out in Tsangnyön's version to play the role of villain, remains furious and an even more embarrassing and complete downfall is provided for him than befell Lotön in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Milarepa hints at a guilty secret, which prompts Rechungpa, in spite of Milarepa's attempts to prevent him, to expose Darlo. This awkward sleight of narrative hand transfers the responsibility for exposing Darlo to an uncontrollable Rechungpa, who reveals that Darlo had given a bracelet to a pretty girl, who happened to have faith in Rechungpa (but only a little in Milarepa). Rechungpa, whom one has to assume she confided in, unless the clairvoyant Milarepa had informed him, even goes to her home to bring the mantra-beads that Darlo had given to her. This accords with Tsangnyön's portrayal of Rechungpa as handsome and having his own following distinct from Milarepa's.

The disgraced Darlo, having in this version swapped fates with Lotön (or alternatively one could say that the characters have swapped their names), dies and becomes a

terrifying demon. This is a worse rebirth than the 'wealth-guardian' of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* though inconsistently, the populace are still said to make oaths upon him.

Meanwhile, it is Lotön who becomes one of Milarepa's five close monk-disciples, with an additional anecdote in which he pours blood into his monk's bowl and milk into his skull in order to (successfully) test Milarepa's clairvoyance.

Rechungpa's subsequent departure for India follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version and therefore omits the prestigious throne for Rechungpa. However, Rechungpa's initial motive for going to India is now not solely to learn logic in order to combat the monks in debate, but also to learn sorcery so as to be able to destroy the monks, as in *A River of Blessings,* This is an example of another parallel yet apparently independent addition in these two later texts. This reflects a probable development in the oral tradition that fed new material into the textual tradition, and was perhaps suggested by *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative's account of Rechungpa's involvement with sorcery before his return from India.

Therefore, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* had already muted the portrait of Rechungpa as the perfect pupil, and the narrative modulations and additions of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* increased this by portraying a barely controllable, wayward young Rechungpa, which was to become his established image.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal *(lHa-btsun Rin-chen rNam-rgyal)* (1473–1557)

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, who was Tsangnyön's pupil, entirely omits the debate with scholar-monks in his biography of Rechungpa. Up to this point,[54] Milarepa gives his secret transmissions to Rechungpa, is pleased with his progress and realisation, and choses him to go to India to obtain the *dāka-niṣkāya-dharmas*, providing him with the necessary gold (though Lhatsun does say how it was acquired). Nevertheless, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and its descendants—*A River of Blessings* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*—Milarepa warns Rechungpa not to study logic and debate, even though the narrative has not previously mentioned the subject, so that the statement is incongruous.

Rechungpa places upon Milarepa's head what is now a *large* piece of gold *(gser thig-po che ba),* which has grown considerably from the two grains in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels*. Rechungpa sings a song[55] that is a slight variant of the one he sang at this point in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*[56] and departs.

Thus, in writing a biography that is focused upon Rechungpa and particularly the latter half of his life, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, though he has relied on *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* as his source for this passage, has nevertheless prefered to diminish any details that are detrimental to Rechungpa's image, and given him a much kinder literary treatment than his own guru did.

Götsang Repa (sixteenth century)

In this extensive work, which has become the standard biography of Rechungpa, Götsang Repa bases this episode[57] upon the version in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* which was written by his teacher. He even assumes the reader's familiarity with that work, for in summarizing this episode he merely lists the songs by their titles as they occur in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* without reproducing them in his own text. However, as Lhatsun did, he somewhat diminishes the negative details that Tsangnyön heaped so liberally upon Rechungpa. He omits certain portions or phrases in *The Hundred Thousand Songs* that reflect unfavourably upon Rechungpa, such as, for example, Rechungpa's brusque refusal to allow the scholar-monks to meet Milarepa.[58] Otherwise, he remains faithful to *The Hundred Thousand Songs* narrative, including such new details as exposing Darlo's (*Dar-lo* as it is spelt here) gift of a bangle to a girl.

The Third Drukchen, Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa *('Jams-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa)* (1478–1523)

Like some earlier authors, he simply states that Rechungpa was sent to India for instruction, with no background narrative.[59]

Changchub Zangpo *(Byang-chub bZang-po)*

This passage[60] is a summary based on Gyadangpa, as the biography is much older than the date of its compilation. Therefore it has the primary elements that we find in Gyadangpa and that disappeared from later texts. The patrons erroneously suspect that Rechungpa is going to India to learn logic. Milarepa has Rechungpa seated upon a high throne and offers him the gold so that he may obtain the *five* (as in Gyadangpa) *dharmas*. The story of Darlo (*Dar-lo* as it is spelt here) appears in the Milarepa biography in this collection, not in the Rechungpa biography, and it is also a summary of the corresponding Gyadangpa text, with fewer songs included.[61]

Pawo Tsukla Trengwa and Pema Karpo

Both authors merely mention that Rechungpa was sent to India for the *Ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma*.[62]

Śākya Rinchen (mid-eighteenth century)

Although stated in the colophon to be a summary of Gadé Gyaltsen, which is identical to the Götsang Repa text, the components of this version are more complex than that, for it is not simply a summary of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* episode, as is the case in Götsang Repa/Gadé Gyaltsen, but appears to have drawn on various sources.[63] It has the dual characters of Darlo and Lotön, but merely states that they were overcome by Milarepa's miracles, and does not mention their individual fates. Rechungpa, dissatisfied, pleads to be allowed to go to India to study logic (not sorcery) and Milarepa's response appears to be textually related to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* with identical or similar phraseology: for example, Śākya Rin-chen's 'The desire to answer with bad words is the arising of *Māra*'[64] *(tshig ngan gyi lan 'debs 'dod pa de bdud langs ba yin)* is only a slight modification of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* 'through the desire to answer with bad words, there is the arising of Mārā' *(tshig ngan gyi lan 'debs 'dod pas*[65]*/bdud langs pa yin)*.[66]

In addition to Rechungpa's initial motivation, there is also the misconception of the patrons, who not only believe that he is being sent to learn logic, but even think that this is a good thing to learn. And yet, they plead for Rechungpa to remain. Unlike *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and its descendants, but as in Gyadangpa, *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* Changchub Zangpo's compilation (see above) and *The Great Golden Garland* (see below) Rechungpa *is* provided with a higher throne[67] and five *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma* are listed.[68]

Therefore, Śākya Rin-chen appears to have drawn on Gyadangpa, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and the Tsangnyön narratives to supplement his use of Gadé Gyaltsen.

In Śākya Rin-chen's biography of Milarepa, this episode is given a minimal portrayal with hardly any information.[69]

A Brief history of the site and guru lineage of Drakar Taso (Grub-pa'i gnas-chen brag-dkar rta-so'i gnas dang gnas-rab bla-ma brgyud-pa'i lo-rgyus mdo-tsam brjod-pa) 1828

This simply states that Milarepa sent Rechungpa to India to obtain 'the Dharma of the bodyless ḍākiṇī'.

The Great Golden Garland (gSer-phreng chen-mo) (compiled after 1838)

In spite of the late date of this compilation, this also belongs to an early stratum of narrative development. It follows the Gyadangpa type narrative even more closely than *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* but also without Gyadangpa's second

miraculous meeting of Darlo and Milarepa. It is less detailed than the equivalent passage in Gyadangpa but more so than that in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels*. Darlo *(Dar-lo)* comes to see Milarepa on his own individual initiative. It is Milarepa's pupils in general who wish to kill the monk, and Drigom *('Bri-sgom)* and Rechungpa accompany Milarepa in his song (as in Gyadangpa). Darlo is converted, but although he stops accumulating bad karma and develops good meditation he is not listed as being one of a group of principal monk disciples (thus conforming with Gyadangpa).[70]

The instruction to Rechungpa to go to India is set later on in the narrative and is not directly related to the Darlo incident. As in Gyadangpa and *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* the patrons misconceive the intention of Rechungpa's journey as being to learn logic as a result of the debate with Darlo; Rechungpa is set on a high throne and Milarepa explains the true reason for Rechungpa's departure.[71] The beginning of the song that Gyadangpa merely referred to and was given in full in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* is provided, but after three lines, it changes from verse to prose.[72]

Milarepa appears to have no prior knowledge of Tipupa *(Ti-pu-pa),* as he merely states, 'It is possible that there is a pupil of Nāropa [still alive in India].'[73]

As in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* there is no continuation of the Rechungpa narrative, or a description of his return. There is only a mention of him in passing when he and Milarepa go to stay in a haunted cave.[74]

This text demonstrates the survival, well after the influence of the fully developed popular mythology of Tsangnyön's version, of narratives based in the earliest strata of the tradition.

Without the contemporary witness of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* we have only the variant witnesses of Gyadangpa, *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* Möntsepa, *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, commencing with Vajradhara,* and *The Great Golden Garland* as indications of a version in which Rechungpa is not motivated to go to India by the animosity of the scholars. This version dates back at least to the early thirteenth century. We also have a narrative tradition as exemplified by the Shamarpa's *Clouds of Blessings,* which does not make even a minimal connection between the two narratives of the debate and the journey to India. These versions have now been eclipsed by the narrative tradition which came to full flower with Tsangnyön Heruka and his portrayal of the 'bad boy Rechungpa', which we shall see plenty of in Chapters 7 and 8.

7
THE TEACHINGS OF A BODILESS *ḌĀKIṆĪ*

The Gyadangpa version (mid-thirteenth century)

According to Gyadangpa, Rechungpa travelled to Nepal with a group of people that included the Nyingma master Kyitön *(Kyi-ston)*. He is described as a former hunter who adopted the religious life after being deeply moved by the suffering of a deer he had shot. He was a vegetarian and had many lay pupils.

Rechungpa arrives in Nepal, meaning here the Kathmandu valley, but the border with its neighbouring kingdom is closed because of conflict between them. As we have shown in Chapter 5, this was the kingdom of Tirhut or Mithila, and its troublesome king was the expansionist Nanyadeva (reigned 1079 to 1147).

The text does not specify which of the four towns of the Kathmandu valley Rechungpa went to, but in Götsang Repa, the Newar master Asu says that Tibetans always stayed in Yambu, which is equivalent to the northern part of present Kathmandu, generally known as Thamel.[1] This may have been because of Thamel Vihara, the temple that was established there by Atiśa while he was on route to Tibet.

Kyitön's presence in the narrative serves as an opportunity for an attack on *Dzogchen* practice. Kyitön gives some *Dzogchen* teachings that Rechungpa attends. Rechungpa notices a Newar woman who initially listens respectfully to Kyitön, but becomes displeased and stops listening. She tells Rechungpa that *Dzogchen* is a practice found only among Tibetan yogins, and is erroneous because it denies the existence of deities or demons, which are the source, respectively, of *siddhis* and harm.

Dzogchen was previously derided in Gampopa's biography of Milarepa in a passage that was omitted by Lama Shang *(Bla-ma Zhang)*. In Gampopa, the *Dzogchen* teacher confesses that, in spite of his claims that *Dzogchen* brings immediate enlightenment, he had failed to even gain any benefit from it himself. Therefore, he wanted to become Marpa's pupil, but was prevented by the decrepitude of old age.[2] This is an example of the not uncommon practice in this literature of emphasising the superiority of one's own tradition through belittling another. Nevertheless, we also find Gampopa holding the highest opinion of Dzogchen in his instruction texts. The anecdote has survived in Milarepa literature, even after the adoption of Nyingma practice within the Kagyu. Even *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* in which Milarepa is identified as an emanation of Mañjuśrīmitra,[3] one of the Indian masters in the *Dzogchen* lineage, retains the anecdote. However, the passage is toned down in these later works, so that *Dzogchen* fails Milarepa

only because of his own unworthiness, and only the over-enthusiastic description given by the lama is criticised, not the teaching itself.

The Newar woman is named in the narrative as Bharima. Though Bharima is here used as a personal name, it is evident from other sources that *bharima* is a generic term, which is clearly used here to refer to female lay-devotees or patronesses in Nepal. Hubert Decleer points out that this term designates the wife of a *bhare,* a Newari word derived from Vajracharya 'Vajra master' and thus would mean the wife of a priest.[4]

Rechungpa asks Bharima what her own secret practice is, but she, shocked that he would even ask, refuses to tell. Undeterred, Rechungpa bribes her female servant, who mimics the pose of Vajrayoginī. This apparently inconsequential episode is in fact integral to the narrative structure, for Bharima will turn out to be a pupil of Tipupa, and be of crucial importance to Rechungpa on his return journey.

After spending the winter in Nepal, Rechungpa is encouraged by Milarepa in a dream to go and seek a travel permit from the King. If he has any historical validity, this is King Siṃhadeva, who reigned from around 1110 to 1125.

The records concerning the Kathmandu valley's kings during the lifetime of Rechungpa are somewhat unclear, as the political conditions were unstable and complex. There is the additional confusion of later 'thoroughly unreliable' chronicles that have influenced earlier researchers into the subject.[5] Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the king that he is said to have met.

During Rechungpa's lifetime, it was the Takhura dynasty, founded in the seventh century that reigned in the Kathmandu valley. There were four towns that could potentially each function as the capitals of different kings, at times simultaneously. The entire Kathmandu valley was unified into one kingdom in 1372, but became divided again in 1482. Chronicles, the colophons of texts and inscriptions on coins indicate that there were two contemporary kings during the lifetime of Rechungpa.

The four towns of the Kathmandu valley were as follows:

1 Lalitpur, presently known as Patan. Its Tibetan name was Yerang (*Ye-rangs* or *Ye-rang*), which was derived from its Newari name *Yala* or *Yalai*.[6]
2 Bhatgaon, presently known as Bhaktapur. Its Tibetan name is Khokhom *(Kho-khom)* in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,*[7] Khukhom *(Khu-khom)* in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*[8] or Khutrom *(Khu-khrom),* a corruption of *Khu-khom* in *A River of Blessings*.[9] The Tibetan name is derived from the Newari *Khopo,* cf. the Chinese *Kou-k' ou-mou*.
3 Yambu *(Yam-bu)* is equivalent to the northern part of present-day Kathamandu, a name that has been used only since the fifteenth century. This is roughly equivalent to Thamel, and it was where Atiśa had founded a temple in 1040. This was also the town in which Tibetans stayed.[10]
4 Tripureśvara or Yagal *(Ya-'gal),* which is equivalent to the southern part of modern Kathmandu.[11]

King Śivadeva (19 June 1057–1126) is said to have reigned for twenty-seven years and seven months.[12] This reign therefore appears to have begun soon after the death of King Harśadeva in 1098. However, the only portion of Sivadeva's reign that can be definitely ascertained from colophons is between 1120 and 1123.[13] He was a Saivite, who gilded the temple roof of Paśupati and built a palace at Bhaktapur.[14]

His heir apparent, crown prince Mahendradeva (18 April 1079–1154), appears not to have succeeded to the throne. Petech believes that Mahendradeva was the actual son of Śivadeva,[15] while Regmi believes that he was the son of the contemporary king in the Kathmandu valley, who was closely related to Sivadeva and may even have been his brother.[16]

This other king was King Siṃhadeva, also known as Sīhadeva, who we know from colophons to have reigned at least from 1111 to 1122, while Petech guesses a reign of circa 1110–25.[17] According to both Petech and Regmi.[18] Śivadeva and Siṃhadeva are without question different, contemporary monarchs. They state that previous scholars, such as Sylvain Levi, did not have access to the entire textual evidence, and therefore conflated the two kings. With the entire *Vaṃśavalī* chronicle available, Petech discovered, for example, that the text 'mentions first Śivadeva and a line below Siṃhadeva without the slightest hint about their being one and the same person'.[19] Regmi states that the available colophons 'prove beyond doubt that Siṃhadeva was a different person from Śivadeva and that he ruled independently between 231 [1111] and 242 NS [AD 1122]'.[20]

King Siṃhadeva is unique amongst the kings of Nepal in this period, in that he is 'the only Nepalese King who openly proclaimed his faith in the Buddhist religion'.[21] He is mentioned in the colophons to five Buddhist texts and is referred to as a Parama-saugata (supreme Buddhist), though as Regmi warns, this does not necessarily mean that he was exclusively a Buddhist, for it is possible that he may have been a Śaivite also.[22]

From amongst the colophons that provide evidence for Siṃhadeva's reign from 1111 to 1124, one states that he ruled in Patan in March 1120. However, the first of the Śivadeva colophons indicate that Śivadeva ruled Patan in June 1120. Regmi deduces from this a gradual diminution of Siṃhadeva's power, with the loss of Patan between March and June of 1120.[23]

Though not to be found in Gampopa, Lama Shang, Ritrö Wangchuk or Gyadangpa, later works describe an emissary of a King of both Patan and Bhaktapur bringing gifts to Milarepa when he was staying in what may now be the Nepalese area called Manang, or a place with the same name nearer to these towns.[24]

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels, in a brief parallel version, has a King of India sending the gifts to Milarepa when he is at an unspecified location in Tibet, before his encounter with Darlo.[25]

The Great Golden Garland has a similar scenario, though the king is not identified with a territory.[26]

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,*[27] and *A River of Blessings*[28] Rechungpa's meeting with the King takes place *before* the King sends his emissary to Milarepa, while in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* it takes place *after* (and thus makes for better narrative sense).[29]

In *The Lhorong Dharma History (lHo-rong Chos-'byung),* these events are set around 1110, so that the only possible historical basis for this story would be King Siṃhadeva, whether identical with Śivadeva or not.

In *The All-prevading Melodious Drumbeat (Kun-khyab snyan-pa'i rnga-sgra)* which is the biography of Ra Dorje Drak Lotsawa, Ra Lotsawa is said to go to Nepal at the same

time as Rechungpa. This text, filled with fantastic details, names the king as Sīlabhadra, and that he, his queen and children all attained siddhi.[30]

Thus, the narrative develops over time from its obscure origins in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* and *The Great Golden Garland*. Even if it has no historical basis, it could still be an association of Milarepa with the memory of a Nepalese King known for his patronage of Buddhism.

Rechungpa brings a yak tail and gold as gifts to the King, but he is refused entry and sings a song to the King from outside the courtyard. The King hears the song and has it translated for him. He already knows of Milarepa and Rechungpa, so he gives Rechungpa a travel permit, called a 'ghandra' *(gha-'dra),* which enables him to take twelve people with him to India.[31]

As Rechungpa's destination is Mithila, there is no description of a lengthy or difficult journey. In the very next sentence. Rechungpa is already making an offering to Varacandra and his wife. In Gyadangpa he had previously received Vajrapāni instructions from him and Rechungpa stays with Varacandra for a few days so as to receive whatever instruction remained to be given. He then goes to see the nearby Tipupa. According to Gyadangpa, Rechungpa had already briefly met Tipupa on his previous visit, and so Rechungpa already knew he was of the lineage of Nāropa. However, in the passage where Milarepa sends him to India, Tipupa's name did not come up, which casts further doubt on the historicity of the first visit.

There was no reference to a problem in linguistic communication with Varacandra or Bharima (implying that either they knew Tibetan, which is possible, for Varacandra is listed as the co-translator of a number of Tibetan texts, or Rechungpa knew Newar). However Rechungpa has to rely upon two interpreters to communicate with Tipupa. The implication, whether intended or not, is that Rechungpa knew neither Sanskrit nor Tipupa's own language, which presumably was Maithili, the language of the region. The interpreters are Ma Lotsawa *(rMa Lo-isa-ba),* 'a good translator but not a good person', and Ok Lotsawa *('Og Lo-tsa-ba),* 'a good person but a bad translator'!

These are presumably intended to evoke the memory of, or to actually be, the translators Ma Chöbar *(rMa Chos-'bar,* 1044–89) and Gö Khukpa Lheisé *('Gos Khug-pa lHas-bisas),* with Gö *('Gos)* corrupted to Ok *('Og)* in some versions, such as Gyadangpa.

Ma Chöbar had worked with Tipupa and other teachers that Rechungpa is said to have met. He also translated a text by Nāgārjunagarbha, whom Gyadangpa had said was Milarepa's previous life. However, as he was murdered by poisoning in Tibet when Rechungpa was 5 years old,[32] he cannot be identified with the interpreter in the narrative.

The prolific Gö Lotsawa, a.k.a Gö Khukpa Lhatsé, has seventy-two translations in the Tibetan canon, but he appears to be from an earlier generation, having studied under such masters as Atiśa (982–1054)[33] and had worked on translations with Gayadhara and Dromi Lotsawa (*'Brog-mi Lo-tsā-ba,* 992–1073).[34] Gö Lotsawa also worked with Amoghavajra, who also appears, perhaps anachronistically, in the Rechungpa narrative, on a translation of that author's text on sexual practices.[35] However, he is also said to have been a pupil of Mahākaruṇa as was Ra Lotsawa *(Rwa Lo-tsā-ba),* a contemporary of Rechungpa. Ra's biography depicts him as killing Gö Khukpa Lhatsé by sorcery in response to a similar attack from him.[36] It is possible that Gö Lotsawa studied under Atiśa in his youth and was in his old age at the turn of the eleventh century, but it seems as if we are either

seeing two different individuals, or the Ra biography, which is one of the most fantastic creations of Tibetan literature, is as historically unreliable as it seems to be.

There were other translators with the family name of Gö *('Gos),* including the fifteenth-century author of *The Blue Annals*. However, it was probably the continuing resonance of such names as Gö Lotsawa, Ma Lotsawa, Gayadhara and Amoghavajra that was the cause for their appearance in the Rechungpa narrative.

In Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, Gö Lotsawa is replaced by the more innocuous Jogyal *(Jo-rgyal)*. Jogyal *(Jo-rgyal)* might possibly be a corruption of Gyijo Lotsawa *(Gyi-jo lotsāba),* a.k.a Tulku Daway Ozer *(sPrul-sku zla-ba'i 'od-zer),* who was a pupil of Vajrapāni, who was a pupil of the Mahāmudrā master Maitripa.[37] However, it is more likely an abbreviation of the obscure Jojo Gyaltsen *(Jo-jo [sic] rGyal-mtshan)* that we find in *Biographies of the Kagyu commencing with Vajradhara* and in *The Golden Garland of Ralung,* in which that translator is accompanied by Lenchung Darma Tsultrim *(Glan [sic]-chung Darma Tshul-khrims)*. Lenchung worked on translations with Varacandra and Amoghavajra, a.k.a Vajrāsanaguru.[38]

Rechungpa sings to Tipupa. His song describes his journey from Tibet to Nepal, which had not been previously described in the narrative. It is a dangerous journey over swaying rope bridges, through bandit-infested forests and a plague-ridden Kathmandu valley, where corpses were piled in heaps as if they were compost.[39]

Ma Lotsawa translates the song, but disagrees with Tipupa's favourable impression of Rechungpa, accusing Rechungpa of having previously composed the 'spontaneous' song, Tipupa decides to test Rechungpa with questions that Rechungpa answers with another song which includes a request for the five 'teachings of the bodiless ḍākiṇī thus discrediting Ma Lotsawa's criticism. Tipupa then sings to Rechungpa listing these instructions that he says he will give to him.[40]

Rechungpa has to wait some time for Tipupa to give the teachings, and 'all the Indians' tell Rechungpa that he is stupid, because Indians are reluctant to teach Tibetans, while he could have had them from the Nepalese Asu, who lives in Tibet. Asu means 'birthless', so he was also known in Tibetan as Balpo Kyemé *(Bal-po sKye-med)* 'Nepalese Birthless'.[41] He had an Indian grandfather, but was a native of Nepal and became a pupil of Vajrapāṇi, who had been a pupil of Maitripa. He is said to have been en route to China on pilgrimage when he married and settled down in Tibet where he founded the Megyur (*sMad- 'gyur,* 'lower' or 'western' translation) tradition of Māhamudrā.

Maitripa (995/8–1075) had been the principal master of Mahāmudrā in India. He had been a pupil of Nāropa and his many pupils included Marpa Chökyi Lodrö *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros)* and Tipupa. He was therefore one of the Indian progenitors of the Kagyu lineage, and a principal figure in the succession of the Mahāmudrā lineage. The date for his death as presented in *The Blue Annals* did not specify the element and Roerich appears to have chosen the wrong year, resulting in the dates 1007/10–87, which does not correspond with the biographies of his pupils. He is said to have started teaching after the death of Nāropa in 1040. His hermitage appears to have been in Mithila a.k.a Tirhut, near to the then border with Nepal.

Maitripa's pupil who taught Asu was 'the Indian Vajrapāṇi Vajrapāṇi'.(born 1017)[42] was known as one of 'the four great pupils of Maitripa' and is of great importance for the introduction of the Mahāmudrā tradition into Tibet. The other three 'great pupils' of

Maitripa were Natekara (a.k.a Sahajavajra), Devākaracandra (a.k.a Sūnyatāsamādhi) and Rāmapāla. Rechungpa is depicted as receiving teachings from Rāmapāla, who is the author of one canonical text (No. 2253) which was taught by Vajrapāṇi in Tibet,[43] and was translated into Tibetan by Natso Lotsawa (*Nag-tsho Lo-tsā-ba,* born 1011). Devākaracandra was a high caste Newar from Yagal *(Ya-'gal),* that is, Tripureśvara, which is equivalent to the present-day southern half, or main half of Kathmandu (with Thamel as the northern half).

Vajrapāṇi went to Lalitpur/Patan in 1066, at the age of 49. In 1074, Dampa Kor (*Dam-pa sKor,* 1062–1112) is told that Vajrapāṇi, who would then have been 57 years old, is one of the three great masters in Nepal,[44] the other two being Pamtingpa (the master of Pharping,) and Bharo Chadum *(Bha-ro Phyag-rdum)*.[45] He is absent from a list of great masters that dates to the 1080s, which implies that he had passed away by that time, before reaching the age of 70 and was not living when Rechungpa came to India.

Vajrapāṇi became so eminent and wealthy that the translator Chal Kunga Dorje *(dPyal Kun-dga'rDo-rje)* considered him above his means to invite to Tibet, and instead invited Devākaracandra, another of the four principal pupils of Maitripa.[46] Nevertheless Vajrapāṇi did go to Tibet on the invitation of Drok José Dorje Bar *('Brog Jo-sras rDo-rje 'Bar)*. Vajrapāṇi had numerous pupils in Tibet and assisted in the translation of nearly forty texts and authored eleven that are preserved in the canon. The 'upper', 'lower' and 'later' traditions of *Māhamudrā* all originate from Vajrapāṇi's pupils, the lower *(smad-'gyur)* being that of Asu.[47] Asu described Vajrapāṇi as a white-haired Paṇḍita who liked to give sugarcane to Tibetans and also enjoyed getting them drunk.[48]

His pupils included the translator Maben Chöbar *(rMa-ban Chos-'bar),* a.k.a Ma Lotsawa *(rMa Lo-tsā-ba),* who was the teacher of Khönpupa *(Khon-pu-pa)* who also worked on a translation with Tipupa.

The apparently random introduction of Asu at this point is significant for studying under Asu will be important in Rechungpa's life and for the Kagyu transmission of Mahāmudrā. Rechungpa also discovers at this time that Bharima is a pupil of Tipupa.[49]

Rechungpa sings another song that appears to look back upon his visit to India and Nepal, listing the people, objects and places he has seen. The contents of this song are at odds with its narrative setting, for the list includes not only Tipupa, but many things or people who have not yet appeared in the narrative, including Siddharājñī and the 'Vārāhī of Bhagala'.[50]

The identity of the latter varies in the narrative tradition and sometimes she is said to be identical with Siddharājñī, but in this text she is understood to be a statue, as is also suggested in certain other versions.

One of the 'wondrous sights' is 'water flowing from the mouths of makaras' *(chu-srin kha nas chu 'bab)* which could also be understood as being in the singular, but presumably refers to the distinctive Nepali architectural detail of stone *makara* heads from whose mouths water pours at bathing tanks. Seeing water issuing from these might not amaze in a modern context, but must have been a marvel for a Tibetan of that time.

Rechungpa stays in the lower storey *('og-khang)* of what appears to be a three-storey building, for Tipupa and his wife are said to be in the middle storey *(bar-khang)*. Rechungpa sneaks upstairs one night to spy on Tipupa, to discover what he is practising.

Ma Lotsawa confronts him, accusing him of being up to no good. Tipupa's wife comes to Rechungpa's defence. The wife is otherwise not mentioned, and her narrative purpose is unclear here. But it may be a remnant from an earlier version, for Tipupa shortly thereafter initiates Rechungpa into sexual practice, to which Rechungpa applies himself assiduously. It is not said with whom he is being so diligent, but during the formal initiation, the pupil was meant to engage in sexual intercourse with the guru's consort, after the guru has done so. The initiation was only given to one pupil at a time in what is known as a 'single transmission' *(cig-brgyud)* though this term has often been misunderstood as the lama only ever transmitting it once to one person. There were such instances, as are described in our sources, but there is also ample evidence of many contemporary practitioners and teachers of 'single transmissions' in both India and Tibet. In the Karma Kagyu, the second Shamarpa ended the tradition of single transmissions of Vajravārāhī, citing the authorisation of prophecy, and thereafter initiation and instructions were given to groups of people and the physical sex had been replaced by symbolism. During Rechungpa's time, however, the initiation was a secret experience. Tipupa would have been advanced in years at this time, but his wife could still have been much younger. There are accounts of both Indian and Tibetan masters, such as Ma Lotsawa and Dampa Sang-gye *(Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas)* having temporary partnerships with very young consorts.[51]

Tipupa transmits to Rechungpa the Maitripa lineage of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī (which includes the bodiless ḍākiṇī teachings, which contain the sexual practices). Rechungpa then holds a *gaṇacakra* to thank Tipupa and sings to him, giving a list of the eleven teachings he has received,[52] which includes only four of the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* and omits the *mahāmudrā,* so that the song agrees with those narratives that have Rechungpa going to India for only four *dharmas*.

After a brief song of farewell, Rechungpa returns to Nepal, where he meets Bharima in the street. He pretends to have gained clairvoyance and sings a song in which he 'realises' from her physical features, etc., the information he has actually discovered in India. For example, he sings that her bloodshot eyes reveal that she meditates on Vajrayoginī, which is the very information she had previously refused to give him.[53]

Bharima does not fall for the trick, realising that Rechungpa has become a pupil of Tipupa and invites him to her home. But Rechungpa has already been invited to stay with another patroness, so in accordance with local manners, Bharima sends a servant to formally invite him. At her home, Bharima allows Rechungpa to copy out the texts she possesses. And then he leaves for Tibet.[54]

The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels

Unfortunately, *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels,* which is closely related to Gyadangpa and also to *The Great Garland of Gold* does not contain this part of the narrative, principally because it does not have a separate biography dedicated to Rechungpa.

Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, commencing with Vajradhara and *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung*

In *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara,* Rechungpa goes to Nepal, where he receives Cakrasaṃvara and some minor Tantra teachings from Guru Vagīśvarakirti, also known as Pamtingpa *(Pam-thing-pa),* and his younger brother, named Tachung Baro *(Tha-chung 'Ba'-ro),* though according to *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* Tachung is the younger brother and there is a third individual named Baro, even though that is just a general epithet for Newari masters.[55]

Pamting *(Pham-thing)* is the present day Parphing, a scared site on the southern edge of the Kathmandu valley. Lo Bue's analysis of the difficult topic of identifying the number and identity of Pamtingpa brothers, identifies Pamtingpa the elder brother as Dharmamati, a.k.a Abhayakīrti, and Pamtingpa the younger brother as Vagīsvarakīrti, a.k.a Adé Chenpo *(A-des Chen-po)*.[56] However, as they were both pupils of Nāropa (died 1040) and teachers of Marpa Chökyi Lodrö *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros),* they are of an earlier generation, and Rechungpa could not have been their pupil. Yet, a Pamtingpa is declared to be one of the famous masters of Nepal in the 1080s and a contemporary of Atulyavajra and Tipupa.[57] In addition, Marpa Dopa *(Mar-pa Do-pa),* a.k.a Marpa Chökyi Wangchuk (*Mar-pa Chos-kyi dBang-phyug,* 1042–1136),[58] studied under a Pamtingpa as well as Vajrapāṇi and Sumatikīrti, who were also teaching in the latter half of the twelfth century. Marpa Dopa, a younger contemporary of Marpa Chökyi Lodrö, introduced Nāropa's lineage independently into Tibet after receiving it from the latter's pupils. Therefore, this Pamtingpa may refer to a descendant of the more famous master of that name, or even another important master of that locality.

Rechungpa received the teaching of these brothers through two translators: Lotsawa Jojo Gyaltsen *(Lotsā-ba Jo-Jo rGyal-mtshan)* and Lenchung Darma Tsultrim (*Glang-chung* [*sic,* it should be *Glan-chung*] *Dar-ma Tshul-khrims*). Rechungpa does so without any wish to learn scholastic terminology and solely practises meditation.[59]

In an obscure, doubtless summarized passage, an unnamed paṇḍita and lotsawa state that the instruction to drink alcohol, lie in the sun, thoughtlessly enjoy women, and do whatever one wishes, has caused Rechungpa a loss of meditative experience. In what appears to be a non-sequitur, they add that the Acharya Darlo *(Dar-lo)* (in *Biographies*) or Tönpa Darlo *(sTon-pa Dar-blo)* (in *Railing*) has become a *māra,* which is an alternative version of the Tönpa Darlo who appears in Gyadangpa onwards.

After this, Rechungpa receives teachings from Tipupa, Atulyavajra *(a-thu-la ba-dzra)*[60] and Amoghavajra[61] before returning to Tibet.

Amoghavajra is also known as the earlier Vajrāsanaguru *(gDo-rje gDan-pa)*. He was the author of a text translated by Rechungpa with Tipupa. However, he was himself fluent in Tibetan for he translated at least thirty-four texts on his own, twenty of which were his own works. He is a contemporary of teachers featured in Rechungpa's biography. He was a pupil of Paiṇḍapātika and of Mitrayogin[62] (whose transmission includes a distinct form of Jinasāgara, white in colour unlike the red of Rechungpa's lineage). He translated ninety texts with Bari Rinchen Drak *(Ba-ri Rin-chen Grags),* a.k.a Bari Lotsawa (*Ba-ri Lo-tsā-ba* (1040–1111).[63] His work begins from the middle of the eleventh century, for he worked on a translation[64] with Rinchen Zangpo (*Rin-chen*

bZang-po, 958–1055), and one of his texts was translated by Atiśa (982–1054) and Natso Lotsawa *(Nag-tsho Lo-tsā-ba)*.[65] He also made translations with Ma Lotsawa *(rMa Lo-tsā-ba)*[66] and Gö Lhatsé *('Gos lHa-brtsas)*.[67]

In Götsang Repa, Amoghavajra is curiously depicted as Tipupa's uncle. He is the fearsome yogin who tells Rechungpa that he has seven days left to live. This is particularly anomalous as according to the narrative Rechungpa is supposed to have already received teachings from him in Nepal.

Atulyavajra a.k.a Atulyadāsa, Atulyadāsavajra, Atulyavajra, Atulyapāda Adulopa and Aduladhasa, was one of the seven 'middle-ranking' pupils of Maitripa,[68] as was Tipupa. He was one of the four most famous masters in Nepal during the 1080s and assisted on the translation of eight canonical texts, three of them[69] with Ngok Loden Sherab (*rNgog Blo-ldan Shes-rab,* 1059–1109) who came to Nepal in the mid-1090s[70] and one[71] with Ban Rinchen Drak (*Ba-ri Rin-chen Grags,* born 1040).

The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung then states that Rechungpa obtained the five requested dharmas, plus the other six (though in both available editions of this text, this is added up to thirteen dharmas!)

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje

In this version, Rechungpa goes to Nepal with the *Dzogchen* master Kyitön and about fifteen of the latter's pupils.

Bharima is here clearly used as a generic term rather than a personal name. The text relates that all the *bharimas* came to hear Kyitön teach. Rechungpa notices one *bharima* becoming displeased as the talk continues. He approaches her and she condemns Kyitön's teaching in similar terms to those in the Gyadangpa version. She refuses to tell Rechungpa what her own practice is, and, as in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa bribes her servant, who then adopts a yoginī posture.

Having to spend the winter in Nepal, Rechungpa learns 'the Vārāhī of the Nepalese Hangbu Karmo *(Hang-bu dKar-mo)*'.[72] The female ending of this name is an error. The text does not state that he received the teaching directly from 'Hangbu Karmo', but later versions specify that he received them directly from a master with a similar, but masculine, name. Möntsepa, however, states, probably incorrectly, that Hang-ngu Karpo *(Hang-ngu dKar-po)* was female.[73] This person is almost certainly the Newar master Varendraruci.

According to *The Blue Annals,* Hamu Karpo's 'real name' was Puṇyākarabhadra *(bSod-nams 'byung-gnas),* while his formal name was Varendraruci. He learned Vajravārāhī from Devākaracandra, a.k.a Śūnyatāsamādhi, one of the four great pupils of Maitripa.[74] Perhaps it is because he was a teacher of the Vajrayoginī practice that the Rechungpa narrative tradition has transformed his name into a female form. However, he is a male Hangu Karpo *(Ha-ngu dKar-po)* in *A River of Blessings* and is Hadu Karpo *(Ha-du dKar-po)* in Götsang Repa. The Newar word *haridu* is the equivalent of the Tibetan *Ngakpa (sngags-pa, māntrika),* denoting a married *vajrayāna* practitioner.[75] Although all our Tibetan sources refer to him as Nepalese, Lo Bue notes a reference to him in a commentary as being Indian. Lo Bue concludes that this must be a nickname, but perhaps it is a simple error.[76]

There was an earlier Hangdu Karpo *(Haṅdu dKar-po)*, a.k.a Śāntibhadra, who was a teacher of Marpa Chökyi Lodrö *(Mar-pa Chos-kyi Blo-gros)*.[77] The Rechungpa narrative must refer to the later Hadu or Hamu Karpo, whose Sanskrit name was Puṇyākarabhadra, while his scholastic name was Varendraruci. He was a leading Newar Buddhist master at the end of the eleventh century and authored a Vajravārāhī text.[78]

Although he received Vajravārāhī from Devākaracandra, they together received an initiation from Bendawa [*Ben-da-ba* (a.k.a Jinadatta or Paiṇḍapātika)]. Rechungpa is also said to have received teaching from Bendawa. There was an earlier Bengalese master named Bendawa, who was also known as Avadhūtipa. The later Paiṇḍapātika was his pupil and could have been a contemporary of Rechungpa. He was also known as Jinadatta, and was said to be from a low caste in Magadha.[79] With his pupil Buddhadatta, he went to Nepal where he also taught Devākaracandra, Varendraruci and Mahé Bharo *(Ma-he Bhāro)*.

Bendapa also taught the translator Chal Kunga Dorje *(dPyal Kun-dga'rDo-rje),* who took Devākaracandra to Tibet and who was also a pupil of Varendraruci a.k.a Hamu Karpo *(Ha-mu dKar-po)*.[80] In the biography of Ra Lotsawa *(Rwa Lo-tsā-ba),* who is said to have travelled to Nepal at the same time as Rechungpa, it is told that Chal Kunga Dorje was initially cynical about Ra, but then developed faith in him.[81]

Like Vajrapāṇi and Tipupa, Varendraruci worked on translations with Ma Lotsawa *(rMa Lo-tsā-ba)*[82] and, like Atulyadāsa, he worked on translations with Ngok Loden Sherab (*rNgog Blo-ldan Shes-rab,*[83] 1059–1109) who came to Nepal in the mid-1090s.[84] Ngok Loden Sherab was one of the principal translators of the eleventh century. Together they translated texts authored by Buddhadatta,[85] Śūnyatāsāmādhi[86] and Avadhūtipa (the earlier Paiṇḍapātika).[87]

The Blue Annals includes an amusing anecdote that when Hamu Karpo/ Varendraruci *(Ha-mu dKar-po)* invited Bendapa, a.k.a Paiṇḍapātika and his pupil Buddhadatta to his home to give himself, his own teacher Devākaracandra, and Mahe Bhāro, an initiation, five consorts were required: one for each of them. However Hamu Karpo's wife was jealous, so the young girls were rendered invisible. Her suspicions were aroused on seeing the bowls of alcohol that the girls were holding. However, Paiṇḍapātika came to the rescue by telling her that they were just floating in the air through his blessing!

Rechungpa addresses the same song to the Nepalese King as he does in the other versions, but this time oddly doing so from 'on top of the palace'.[88] As in Gyadangpa, the King recognises Rechungpa to be a pupil of Milarepa, and gives him a pass, here called 'a *gendre* sign' *('gan-'dras rtags),* which in Gyadangpa was *gha-'dra*). In this version, the King is more generous to Rechungpa, allowing him to take as many people with him as he wishes, so that Rechungpa takes along a hundred people, not just twelve.

As Varacandra is absent from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* (which has no account of Rechungpa's illness and cure), Rechungpa goes directly to Tipupa and sings to him the same songs as in Gyadangpa. Ma Lotsawa appears suddenly in the narrative, indicative of a missing introduction, to cast his aspersions on Rechungpa's wisdom. As in Gyadangpa, Ma Lotsawa is discredited by a further song from Rechungpa, and Tipupa sings of the teachings that he will give Rechungpa.[89]

There is a further lack of narrative wholeness when Rechungpa expresses misgivings about 'these translators' *(lo-ts.tsha-ba 'di rnams),* even though the presence of only one has been mentioned so far. In Gyadangpa we had already been introduced to both translators by this point in the narrative. The other translator appears belatedly in an additional song in which Rechungpa sings to Ma Lotsawa and Gö Lotsawa ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), offering them both gold and asking them not to be jealous.[90]

Gö Lotsawa *('Gos Lo-tsā-ba)* is presumably the correct version of Gyadangpa's Ok Lotsawa *('Og Lotsāba),* the variation resulting solely from an orthographic ambiguity concerning which consonant (the 'or the *ga*) the vowel sign should be centred over, and as '*Gos* is a well-known translator's name it is the Gyadangpa version that is probably corrupt.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje agrees with Gyadangpa in giving Ma Lotsawa an unpleasant role, but goes a little further by making *both* translators dubious characters lacking in gratitude. Amongst our sources, only Changchub Zangpo's text will make Ma Lotsawa the nice translator.

As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa has to wait for the teaching, though here it is said that he has to wait a whole year. When the time is up, as in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa sings to Tipupa the song that lists the wondrous sights he has seen.[91]

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje omits Gyadangpa's night-time spying on Tipupa, but has a new episode related to the song addressed to the translators: Rechungpa privately tells Tipupa of his misgivings concerning Ma Lotsawa's translation, and Tipupa has Gö Lotsawa retranslate the teachings secretly, presumably so that Ma Lotsawa will not know. This conflicts with Rechungpa having misgivings concerning *both* translators in this version, but it could fit Gyadangpa's description of Ok as good-natured but incompetent, though he has no narrative role. Here Gö plays a role, but without an introduction establishing him as good-natured but inadequate. It is as if the two versions have separately preserved different fragments of an original narrative. Rechungpa still does not trust the translation, though the implication is that Gö was deliberately mistranslating. This translation was written down, for Tipupa subsequently confirms to Rechungpa that he has not had a proper translation, but prophesies that Rechungpa will meet a ḍākinī on his way back to Tibet who will correct it.[92]

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje, unlike Gyadangpa, supplies a piece of narrative that matches, belatedly, the lines in the song concerning wondrous experiences in which he states that he has seen Siddharājñī *(Grub-pa 'i rGyal-mo).* Rechungpa receives one night an Amitāyus *abhiṣeka* from the said Siddharājñī. She asks him how long he wishes to live. He answers, 'Until I feel ready to die.' She rejects his answer and says, 'The son should live as long as the father.' Consequently, Rechungpa's life-span is increased from fourty-four to eighty-eight years.[93] Siddharājñī's obscure phrase does not seem to refer to the life-span of Milarepa, for he does not have such a life-span in any of the versions of his life that exist. Perhaps the reader is meant to assume that she is referring to Tipupa. It could be interpreted to mean that Rechungpa is in his forty-fourth year or that he would have died on reaching his forty-fourth year. Whichever interpretation is valid, the entire passage is of dubious authenticity. In *The Blue Annals,* Gö Shönnu Pal rejects this life-span for Rechungpa, which he notes is derived from the mythology of Rechungpa's Amitāyus lineage, but is contradicted by the seventy-eight year life-span supplied by

Rechungpa's own pupils.[94] He is presumably referring here to the lost *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel.*

One night, Rechungpa is present at a *gaṇacakra* held in the forest by a certain Paṇḍita Candragarbha. When it is over, Rechungpa follows Candragarbha to a forest glade where the *paṇḍita* prostrates himself before a wish-fulfilling cow lying under a circle of light. Candragarbha dances in the air, it rains flowers, and *ḍākinīs* appear amidst rainbow-light and sing a song that includes the declaration that the Vārāhī of Bhagala has been born *(bha ga la'i phag mor 'khrung).*[95] Rechungpa falls asleep. He is dismayed on waking up to find that he cannot remember the words of the song, but then finds them written on a palm leaf on the lintel above Tipupa's door. This passage is concluded by the uncommon (in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*) phrase, 'it is said' *(shad-do),*[96] which may indicate an insertion into the narrative from oral sources.

After receiving many teachings, Rechungpa asks someone (one would assume Tipupa, though in Gyadangpa it was some anonymous person) who is presently the master of *Mahāmudrā*. In previous times it had been Maitripa, Tipupa's guru. He is told off for being so stupid as not to know that it is 'the Nepalese guru'.[97] This is a vague reference to Asu, who was more clearly specified by Gyadangpa.

Rechungpa sings to Tipupa a farewell song in which he recounts the teachings he has received and again lists the wonderful sights he has seen, but this time adding Candragarbha and the wish-fulfilling cow. In the song, Siddharājñī is described as being surrounded by secret *ḍākinīs*, a first sign of her gradual deification.[98] Tipupa gives Rechungpa an array of gifts to take to Milarepa, including camphor, saffron, *sindhura,* and a staff of black acacia. After an exchange of songs with Tipupa, Rechungpa departs for Nepal.[99]

In Nepal, he meets Bharima and, as in Gyadangpa, sings her the song interpreting the signs on her body. However, in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Bharima asks not only after Tipupa but also asks if 'the hundred year old Siddharājñī' is well. This is the first mention, made only in passing, of her being of an advanced age. Rechungpa answers that he has also seen the Vārāhī and the wish-fulfilling cow; thus distinguishing between Siddharājñī and Vārāhī, but without the narrative providing any information on the latter.[100]

Unlike Gyadangpa, where Rechungpa merely obtains more texts from Bharima, here Rechungpa shows Bharima his own text, and Bharima reads it with alternating sorrow and joy; she complains that Rechungpa's ignorance of the (unspecified) language is a major defect, for the envious translators have omitted every single important instruction. She edits the text, making cuts and additions. Rechungpa realises that Tipupa's prophecy has been fulfilled. This is an instance of a prophecy and its fulfilment entering the literary tradition together.[101]

Khachö Wangpo, the second Shamarpa

This text describes Rechungpa's departure to and return from India, but nothing of his stay there.

The Great Chronicle of India and Tibet (rGya-bod Yig-tshang Chen-mo)

This merely states—as in *The Red Annals*—that Rechungpa went to India five times, without specifying what these visits consisted of.[102]

The Lhorong History of the Dharma (lHo-rong Chos-'byung) *(written from 1446 to 1451)*

This text provides a brief summary of Rechungpa's visit, mentioning Tipupa (written as *Ti-phu*) and Bharima, but supplying only the barest bones of the narrative without providing any detail.[103]

The Blue Annals *(completed 1478)*

This text does not describe Rechungpa's visit to India.

Möntsepa (written somewhere between 1450 and 1475)

As in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Rechungpa travels to Nepal with Kyitön. When he arrives there he asks 'a younger Bharima' to put him up.[104] We will find this detail implied in Changchub Zangpo and stated specifically in Götsang Repa. The 'older Bharima's' condemnation of *Dzogchen* and Rechungpa's interrogation of her servant are omitted.

As in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Rechungpa sings a song to the King after being unable to gain entry, though in this version he is said to do so through a window. It is added that the King asks him to write a letter requesting a travel permit. It seems to state that Rechungpa asked for a travel permit for nineteen people, and is given one for thirteen (which would agree with Gyadangpa's version that he had twelve fellow travellers). However the brief passage is ambiguous and could be interpreted to mean that nineteen were given permission in the King's letter, but only thirteen went on the journey.[105]

As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa first visits the aged[106] Varacandra and then proceeds to Tipupa (*Ti-bu* in this version). When Rechungpa pleases Tipupa with his first song that describes his journey, the narrative introduces Ma Lotsawa *(dMa' Lo-tsā-ba)* as making the same objection as in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje. dMa'* is but an orthographic variant of the same phoneme that occurs as *rMa* in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and agrees with them both in giving this translator an unpleasant character.[107]

As in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Tipupa sings a song that lists the five teachings of the bodiless ḍākinīs (*ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma*) that Rechungpa needs. Tipupa adds that he received these instructions from Ghayadhara and Maitripa,

thus implying he was not born early enough to be a direct pupil of Nāropa, who died in 1040.

Tipupa gives this teaching to Rechungpa and offers him even more instructions, but Rechungpa surprisingly demurs, because, he explains, that he is eager to return to Tibet because of Milarepa's advanced age.[108] As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa offers a 'sacred feast' or *gaṇacakra* in honour of Tipupa and a sings a verse of farewell. Möntsepa adds that Tipupa gives Rechungpa a statue to take to Milarepa, which differs from the gifts described in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

Rechungpa's song of the wonderful things he has seen is omitted, and there is no reference at all to Siddharājñī.

As in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Rechungpa, having returned to Nepal, meets Bharima in the street and sings her a 'clairvoyant' song. In this version she asks him to repeat it, which he does. This passage then concludes briefly with his going to her home and receiving instructions from her. There is no mention of the problem of there being another host, or of his texts being mistranslated, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

Möntsepa adds that Rechungpa also received instruction from a Nepalese yoginī named Hang-ngu Karpo *(Hang-ngu dKar-po),* though this may be a narrative corruption, like *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* Hangbu Karmo *(Hang-bu dKar-mo),* and is contradicted by the male ending for the name. This teacher was male and known as Varendraruci. Also, in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* Rechungpa was a pupil of Hangbu Karmo *(Hang-bu dKar-mo)* on his outward, not his return, journey.[109]

Möntsepa adds that the Nepalese King declares that he venerates Milarepa and gives Rechungpa a letter to take to him. The King's veneration of Milarepa, though not present in Gyadangpa's biography of Milarepa, is present in *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels, The Great Golden Garland, The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and *The Lhorong Dharma History*.

A River of Blessings

This text[110] follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* closely in this episode. There are a few minor differences. Instead of asking Bharima what instruction she has received, he asks her to give him instruction, but receives the same reply: 'I don't know any.' He receives Vārāhī from a male named Hangu Karpo, that is, Varendraruci, (spelt *Ha-ngu dKar-po* and not *Hang-ngu dKar-po*) contrasting with the female Hangbu Karmo *(Hang-bu dKar-mo)* above. Otherwise the description of his time in India is practically identical.

Tsangnyön Heruka's *Commentary on the Saṃvara-ḍākiṇī-karṇa-tantra*

This text does not describe Rechungpa's visit to India.

Tsangnyön Heruka's The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa

The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa covers this period of Rechungpa's life in one brief passage that merely summarises the contents of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* but follows its sequence of events:

> In Nepal, Rechungpa and Kyitön had a little religious activity. He met Bharima, a pupil of Tipupa. He told his story to the King of Bhaktapur and requested a travel permit. [The King] said, 'You are a pupil of the siddha that I was unable to bring here,' and Rechungpa obtained a *'ga-'dra* (cf. *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje—'gan-'dras;* Gyadangpa: *gha-'dra*) and travel provisions. He went to India, met Tipupa and received the *dharmas* that he desired. Tipupa had faith in the venerable [Milarepa] and sent him an acacia staff. Also, Rechungpa met Ekamātra Siddharājñī and received the instructions on Amitāyus.[111]

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (1473–1557)

This passage is based upon *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but the narrative is brief. It commences by simply stating that he went to Nepal and sought a travel permit from the King. The song sung to the King is given in full.[112] As in Gyadangpa, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* the King knows him to be a pupil of Milarepa and gives him a pass, which, unlike the preceding versions, is given a Tibetan name only *(lam-yig)*. He also gives him provisions.

In Nepal and India he receives teachings from many gurus, but Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal specifies only Tipupa by name.[113] As in the other versions, Rechungpa sings to Tipupa of his journey, Ma Lotsawa criticises him, Tipupa is pleased by a second song and sings to Rechungpa.[114]

Echoing Rechungpa's dialogue with Bharima in Gyadangpa, Changchub Zangpo and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* versions, Rechungpa asks Tipupa what *his* deity-practice is, and though Tipupa initially states that it is a secret, he gives Rechungpa the *abhiṣeka,* telling him to keep it secret.

Tipupa adds that he had received this instruction from his own father, who had received it from Ghayadhara, who had been a pupil of Nāropa and Maitripa. He adds that while a child, he also, in the company of his father, received the instructions directly from Ghayadhara.[115] This differs somewhat from Möntsepa, in which Tipupa is said to be a pupil of Ghayadhara and Maitripa.

Rechungpa, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* is suspicious of Ma Lotsawa's translation, but offers gold and sings to him alone, and not to both translators. Ma Lotsawa re-translates the teaching, but Rechungpa remains doubtful, and tells Tipupa so. As a result, the instructions are again translated, secretly, by Lotsawa Jogyal *(Lo-tsā Jo-rgyal),* who is here the equivalent of the Gö Lotsawa (or Ok Lotsawa) of the other versions.[116]

Then knowing (though it is not explained how) that he has only seven days to live, he goes to Siddharājñī and receives the Amitāyus and other instruction, including Jinasāgara.[117]

At a *gaṇacakra,* he offers gold to Tipupa, Siddharājñī, and *three* translators (though it is not specified who they are) and he sings to them the song that lists the wondrous things he has seen. The song includes the Vārāhī of Bhagala distinct from Siddharājñī, and also the wish-fulfilling cow, a certain Śīlabharo of Nepal, and 'the conduct of Bharograma', none of which appear in this narrative, and are now a mystery.[118] The narrative also omits any reference to Bharima by Tipupa.

A passage which has no parallel in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* describes how Siddharājñī is present at a *gaṇacakra,* stares hard at Rechungpa and then sings him a song,[119] in which she declares Rechungpa to be, simultaneously, Vajradhara, Cakrasaṃvara, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi. She adds that he must go back to Tibet where he will teach beings at a particular place sacred to herself and the *jñānā-ḍākinīs.* It is said to be on the southern edge of Tibet, south-east of the image of Śākyamuni (which is a reference to the Jowo *(Jo-bo)* statue in Lhasa) and north-east of Mön *(Mon),* a 'land of ignorance'. The Mon people are a minority group on both sides of the border with Arunachal Pradesh in India, and to the east of Bhutan, which is sometimes also included within this generic name.[120] The location described is that of the Loro *(Lo-ro)* and Jar *(Byar)* areas, in the present day Tsona and Lhuntse counties of southern Tibet,[121] which is where Rechungpa was based in the latter half of his life.[122] Also, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* she prophesies that he will live to his eighty-eighth year.

Nowhere else in the literature (apart from the introduction to this text) have we previously seen such a hagiographic acclamation of Rechungpa. Rechungpa's extended life-span in this version demonstrates that this passage is unlikely to be derived from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* by Rechungpa's own pupils. Therefore the 'prophecy' of the area of Loro also post-dates Rechungpa's lifetime, and is the result, not the cause, of his eventual geographic location.

Siddharājñī also gives Rechungpa a gift to take to Milarepa: a *kapāla,* made from the head of an actual ḍākinī from Oḍḍiyāna, her flaying-knife and her bone-jewellery.[123]

The narrative coincides once more with that of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* when Rechungpa bids farewell to Tipupa, but with some additional material. Tipupa gives Rechungpa the 'Six Teachings of Equal Taste' *(ro-snyoms skor-drug)* stating that they appeared in Nāropa's mind spontaneously while he underwent his twelve hardships under Tilopa. They are said to be the ghee distilled from the ocean of milk that is India, an instruction not evident in the Tantras, but possessed by Nāropa alone. Contradicting the earlier passage, which said he was a child when he met Nāropa's pupil, Ghayadhara, Tipupa states that he received this teaching directly from Nāropa. He tells Rechungpa that this is not the time for this teaching to be spread in Tibet; but should be concealed as a *terma (gter-ma)* for three generations later a worthy individual will discover it.[124] This is a reference to the *terma* discovered by Tsangpa Gyaré *(gTsang-pa rGya-ras),* which is important for the Drukpa Kagyu lineage. It is distinct from the *terma* referred to in Möntsepa at the point when Rechungpa is about to leave Tibet for India,[125] but Götsang Repa compiled references to both *terma* in his text. There follows a farewell song on the

subject of this quintessential teaching of Nāropa and its future discovery, repeating in verse the contents of the preceding prose.[126]

In the Möntsepa narrative, Rechungpa was offered more teachings but decided to hurry back to Tibet to see Milarepa. In Lhatsun's biography, Rechungpa stays to receive the remaining teachings, which include the *Mahāmudra Doha* that Rechungpa will later be described as receiving for the first time from Asu in Tibet.[127]

There is a final farewell song, with a long list of teachings received,[128] which include the *puraprave*ś*a* practice of entering another's body, which features prominently in the Darma Dodé *(Dar-ma mDo-sde)* and Tipupa myth. Tipupa gives Rechungpa gifts to take to Milarepa: the black acacia staff listed in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but also an iron vajra of miraculous origin, a painting of Cakrasaṃvara, an antelope-skin and a *ḍamaru.*

There is yet another final *gaṇacakra,* and another farewell song in which Rechungpa repeats the list of wondrous things he has seen, this time including Candragarbha as well as the wish-fulfilling cow, even though the narrative passage that explains who they were has been omitted from the Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal narrative.[129]

There is yet another farewell song, before Rechungpa leaves for Nepal in which he wishes good health to Tipupa.[130]

In Nepal, Rechungpa receives teachings from Asu and Māhakaruṇa. Bharima is introduced for the first time into the Lhatsun narrative at this point, and is described as a pupil of Tipupa. Rechungpa offers her his text and sings a song asking her for her blessing,[131] and not the song interpreting her physical features that appears in the previous versions.

From this point on, the narrative coincides with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* though in a briefer form. Bharima reads Rechungpa's text and is alternately pleased and angered. She complains about Rechungpa not knowing the language, and corrects the translation. He then leaves for Tibet.[132]

Götsang Repa

This extensive version shares a narrative tradition with Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, and so closely follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but also attempts to comprehensively compile elements from various sources.

In Möntsepa, *'Buddhahood just through Hearing'* was a *terma* text that Milarepa told Rechungpa to obtain from India, though there was no subsequent description of his doing so. In Götsang Repa it is said that Rechungpa had *already* received this text from Varacandra on his earlier visit. Varacandra instructs him to bury it where it would be discovered seven generations later.[133]

In agreement with the Ra Lotsawa biography, Götsang Repa says that Rechungpa went to Nepal in the company of both Ralo Dorje Drakpa *(Rwa-lo rDo-rje Grags-pa)* (Ralo is short for Ra Lotsawa) as well as Khyitön Changchub Sempa *(Khyi-ston Byang-chub Sems-dpa').* The name Khyitön, spelt *Khyi-ston,* literally 'dog teacher' instead of *Kyi-ston,* allows for a story in which the teacher's name originates from his giving up his hunting dogs.

En route to the Kathmandu valley, Rechungpa is invited to the home of a previous host, while Ra Lotsawa goes to another house and leaves the narrative. The next passage has the function of establishing Rechungpa's supremacy over these other two teachers. Khyitön and his pupils are left searching for lodging. Rechungpa invites him to stay with him. Khyitön becomes drunk and in his enthusiasm for Rechungpa, rather peculiarly (unless there is some scribal corruption here) bites Rechungpa on the chest.[134] He calls Rechungpa a true Dharma practitioner and criticises Ra Lotsawa, calling him a proud, grandiose lama. Rechungpa refuses the 'old monk's' sycophantic request to carry his baggage for him for the rest of the journey.

On arriving in the Kathmandu valley, Rechungpa stays, as is also related in Changchub Zangpo and Möntsepa, with a younger Bharima *(bharim chung shos)*. There follows the episode of Khyitön teaching *Dzogchen* to the Nepalese and Rechungpa's meeting with an older Bharima that we already know well from other sources. She is here specified to be Bhari-yoginī, the daughter of Bhari-bhaśa.

In this version, Rechungpa's efforts to discover Bharima's secret practice, which is Vajravārāhī, are multiplied, superfluously, in presumably an aggregation of variants of the story. In addition to bribing the servant, whose pose leaves him uncertain, he climbs the wall of Bharima's house to look in through her window at her images, only to find too many. He finally obtains the information, including that Tipupa is her guru, from simply bribing her husband with some flowers and fruit![135]

Rechungpa goes to see Māhakaruṇa *(Ye-rang-pa),* who Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal said gave teachings to Rechungpa on his *return* to Nepal. Māhakaruṇa was the principal teacher of Ra Lotsawa, but refuses to give Rechungpa a deity initiation.

Māhakaruṇa's name is usually given as Yerangpa *(Ye-rang-pa)*. Yerang is the Tibetan for Lalitpur, now known as Patan, the southern half of the present-day urban sprawl of Kathmandu, while Kathmandu proper is only the area north of the river. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Lalitpur, or Lalitpura was a separate town with its own palace and at times king. In Götsang Repa, Asu states that Lalitpura was the town in the Kathmandu valley that Indians settled in, while Tibetans stayed in Yambu *(Yam-bu),* equivalent to Thamel in the north of present-day Kathmandu, while neither Indians nor Tibetans settled in either Yagal (*Ya-'gal,* equivalent to southern Kathmandu) or Bhaktapur.[136]

The name Yerangpa could theoretically apply to more than one master. However, as Lo Bue points out, Yerangpa is Mahākaruṇa, who he describes as 'one of the greatest Newar scholars of the eleventh century'. He was known as both 'the great upāsaka of Lalitpur' and as Māhakaruṇa *ye rang gi dge bsnyen chen po'am bal po thugs rje chen po*.[137]

He is said to be one of the four masters in Nepal famous in Tibet during the teens of Khönpuwa (*'Khon-pu-ba,* 1069–1124), that is, in the 1080s. The other three famous masters are said to be Pamtingpa (*Pham-thing-pa,* that is, Vagīśvarakirti of Pharping), Atulyavajra and Mohan Dorje *(Mo-han rDo-rje)*. Khönpuwa eventually went to Nepal in 1094 and received the teaching of Maitripa from Mahākaruṇa.[138] Two other significant Tibetan pupils of Mahākaruṇa were Ra Lotsawa *(Rwa Lo-tsā-ba)* and Gö Lhetsé *('Gos lhas-brtsas)*. *The Blue Annals* records that Ra Lotsawa Dorje Drak initially

studied primarily under Mahākaruṇa in Nepal.[139] Ra Lotsawa brought Mahākaruṇa to visit Tibet where he gave him 1,000 ounces of gold, and afterwards sent him offerings a further thirty-seven times until Mahākaruṇa's death.[140] *The Blue Annals* also records that Gö Lhetsé *('Gos lHas-btsas)* studied under 'the upāsaka of Yerang' or the Nepalese Mahākaruṇa *(Thugs-rje Chen-po)*.[141] This is the translator who it seems some Rechungpa biographies imply was working with Tipupa.

Mahākaruṇa was a pupil of the Nepalese master named Kanakaśrī, as was Malgyo Lotsawa Lodrö Drak *(Mal-gyo lotsāba blo gros grags)*.[142] In Götsang Repa he is also said to have received Maitripa's Vajravārāhī lineage from Rāmapāla, a pupil of Maitripa who is also said to have taught Rechungpa.[143]

As in the previous versions, Rechungpa has to stay in Nepal through the winter because of a war between 'the King of Nepal and the King of India'. During this time Rechungpa receives Vajravārāhī from the Nepalese Hadu Karpo (*Ha-du dKar-bo,* who is Varendraruci). This form of his name contrasts with *Hang-bu dKar-mo* in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and 'the Nepalese yoginī named *Hang-ngu dKar-po'* in Möntsepa's description of Rechungpa's return to Nepal.

He receives Cakrasamvara teachings from Bhoro Shorchung *(Bho-ro Shor-chung)* and studies under the siddha Amogha [vajra]. He sees 'the conduct of the attachment-less siddha Śrīlabharo' *(zhan-pa med-pa grub thob śrī la bha ro'i spyod-'gros mthong),* which must be a corruption of Śīlabharo, the form that appears in Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal. This is the equivalent of the Śīlabhadra, whose conduct is mentioned in every version of the song Rechungpa sang to Tipupa concerning the wondrous things he has seen. This is the only instance in which this character appears in a prose narrative. Even here, however, there is no clarification to its meaning, which appears to have survived in a song the meaning of which has been forgotten. However, the spelling in this version at least makes the phrase appear to be meaningful.

The subsequent meeting with the king is the same as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* but with more details. His pass is referred to as a *ghaṇḍa'i rtags*, literally 'the sign of a bell'. This may be the uncorrupted form of the Indian word, or a rationalisation based upon the previous version. Sign *(rtags)* could here be the translation of *mudrā* which in India was the seal bearing ring as well the seal itself that is impressed upon a document.

On arriving in India, Rechungpa first studies Tantras under the 'the junior Kashmiri Priest' *(Kha-che Ben-chung),* Bendawa *(Ben-da-ba)* and Atulyavajra, a.k.a Atulyadāsa, and learns the controlled transference of consciousness at death *('pho-ba)* from an unnamed yoginī who could walk on water.[144]

The meeting with Tipupa is the same as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. It however includes an amusing version of the night-time spying episode found in Gyadangpa. While Rechungpa is staying with the guru, he has his bed in a *copari*[145] that he shares with Ma Lotsawa. *Copari* is not a Tibetan word, but *Copara* does occur as a Newar name for a simple building with a roof of grass or reed.[146] It is still in common use in Urdu for a simple straw hut.[147] However, the building referred to here is more elaborate for it has more than one storey, as Tipupa is sleeping upstairs with his consort. Rechungpa sneaks upstairs to listen to the guru recite his mantra, hoping to identify it so that he can request that teaching, but fails to make it out. In an example of an oral

narrative elaboration, Thrangu Rinpoche, though relating this episode from Götsang Repa's text, added the detail that he could not hear the mantra over his own excited breathing. In Götsang Repa, it is Tipupa, after concluding his practice, and not Ma Lotsawa, as in Gyadangpa, who asks Rechungpa to explain what he is up to creeping around at night with no clothes on. Tipupa's consort and Ma Lotsawa, now awake, come and join in the conversation. Rechungpa confesses what he was trying to do and they all laugh at him.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje did not describe Tipupa's antecedents, but here, as in Lhatsun, Tipupa tells Rechungpa where his teachings come from; though there are some variations. According to Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal,[148] Tipupa's father received instruction from Ghayadhara, a pupil of Nāropa and Maitripa. In Götsang Repa, the same sentence is repeated, but with a difference of case and the presence of the verb *yin* so that it reads that his father *was* Ghayadhara.[149] This passage also changes the identity of Tipupa's teachers when he was a child from being his father and Ghayadhara to being Nāropa and Maitripa themselves, whereas Möntsepa had Tipupa declaring himself to be a pupil of Ghayadhara and Maitripa.[150] No reference is made in this part of Götsang Repa to Tipupa being Marpa's son, Darma Dodé (Dar-ma mDo-sde), which is a narrative found in Tsangnyön Heruka's *Life of Marpa (Mar-pa'i rnam-thar),*[151] even though earlier on in Gösang Repa's text that story was related to Rechungpa during his first visit to India, in an evident insert into the narrative.[152] In that earlier passage, Darma Dodé is said to have occupied the body of a 12-year old Dharmavajra, the eldest child of Ghayadhara, with Paṇḍita Amoghavajra as maternal uncle, Paṇḍita Candragarbha as paternal uncle and Līlāvajra *(sGegs-pa'i rDo-rje)* as paternal grandfather.

Götsang Repa here includes the story of a naturally formed image of Vajrayoginī. This could be assumed to be the narrative background for the Vārāhī of Bhagala referred to in the song on the wondrous things. However, a human Vārāhī of Bhagala will soon appear in this narrative. The story of the statue appears to be a variant of the wish-fulfilling cow story in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* which will also appear later on in this text.

It is said that Ghayadhara, who is Tipupa's father, had a calf that was not obtaining any milk from its mother. Puzzled, Ghayadhara tied one end of a long piece of twine to his own leg and the other to the cow's leg. During a teaching, he felt the twine pull and so he went out and followed the cow to a sandalwood tree. He saw the cow spray all its milk onto it as an offering. The next day, Ghayadhara returned to the tree and cut it down. Inside, he found a Vajrayoginī statue made of beryl. When he consecrated the statue, it rained flowers and a bodiless voice asked him what siddhis he desired. He answered that he wished for 'the lineages of seven siddhas'. In memory of this event, the following verses were written on Tipupa's lintel:

Caṇḍikā has the body of siddhis.
The wish-fulfilling cow
Found the body-image: the Vārāhī of Bhagala.
An invoked rain of flowers fell.

Somanātha attained the siddhi of invisibility.

Ghayadhara, the movement of sunrays,
Siddharājñī, power over life,
Tipupa *(Ti-phu)* was adorned by charnel-ground adornments.[153]

There is no further clarification of the meaning of the song, or of the requested lineages, so it appears that the accompanying narrative has been lost over time. Somanātha was a Kasmiri master of the Kālacakra teachings, who went to Tibet some time after the death of Atiśa in 1054.[154] However, he is not referred to in the biography outside of this song. Caṇḍikā is a goddess, and though there is an Indian goddess of fertility who has this name, in this context it appears to be an euphemism for Vajrayoginī or Vārāhī and refers to the statue discovered within the tree.

As in the earlier versions, Rechungpa has to wait for the teaching and when it is finally given, Rechungpa mistrusts Ma Lotsawa's translation, offers him gold and sings to him, before he continues to translate the remaining teachings (though Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal had Ma Lotsawa retranslate from the beginning). Rechungpa still has misgivings and so, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and in Lhatsun, Rechungpa has the other translator, who is here Jogyal Lotsawa *(Jo-rgyal Lo-tsā-ba)* secretly re-translate the teaching. When this is done, Rechungpa discovers that Ma Lotsawa had left half of the teaching out.[155]

Tipupa makes Kālācakra calculations for Rechungpa. Nāropa was a teacher of Kālācakra, but this teaching did not form a part of either Marpa or Rechungpa's lineages. Tipupa discovers through his calculations that Rechungpa does not have long to live. Therefore he gives him an abhiṣeka and tells him that he should really meet the holder of its teaching.

There now appears another dislocated narrative fragment. At a gaṇacakra, a tall yoginī, wearing bone-adornments and accompanied by some yogins and yoginis appears to lead the rite and then mysteriously disappears at its conclusion. Tipupa states that this was the Vārāhī of Bhagala, who was not at present giving teachings, but Rechungpa could obtain them in the future.[156] However, no further reference is made to her, unless she is identified with Siddharājñī.

There follows an alternative version of the discovery of Rechungpa's short life-span. Tipupa sends Rechungpa to enjoy a festival, but there he meets an intimidating yogin who tells him that he has only seven days left to live. Rechungpa returns to Tipupa, who says that he knew this already, which is why he sent him to the festival, knowing he would meet the yogin, who was none other than Amoghavajra, and become convinced that it was true that he had not long to live. Amoghavajra is not specified, as he was earlier on in the text, to be an uncle of Tipupa, and, in another contradiction, Rechungpa has already been described as meeting this *karṇatantra* master in Nepal.

Tipupa tells Rechungpa that he must go and see Siddharājñī, who, though she appears to be 16, is said to be 500-years old. This is a five-fold increase of her age as given in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Rechungpa meets her and practises the Amitāyus instruction for seven days without sleeping. She then asks him how old he is, and he says he is in his forty-second year, whereas in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* he may have been a week away from the end of a fourty-four-year life-span, which was then

doubled. As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* his life-span is increased to eighty-eight years, with the same obscure phrase 'so that the son will be the same as the father'.[157]

Götsang Repa's narrative then follows that of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Rechungpa follows Candragarbha into the forest, sees the wish-fulfilling cow, hears the ḍākiṇī verses and rediscovers them on Tipupa's lintel. The song itself, however, is not identical with that in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* for it includes the entire list of 'the teachings of the bodiless ḍākiṇīs'.

The final dialogue with Tipupa and Siddharājñī is as in Lhatsun, but with one extra, striking passage. Tipupa, with Siddharājñī's permission, describes her origin and life in terms that present her as no ordinary human being. The description of her birth is evidently modelled on most *terma* versions of Padmākāra's lotus birth, which in its turn was based upon the birth of Sakara as described in *The Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas*.[158]

She first appeared in the centre of Oḍḍiyāna, where all the inhabitants are *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs*. She emerged, as a fully formed 8-year old, out of a lotus growing in front of a crystal gandhola. *Ḍākinīs* circumnambulate her and worship her as the *nirmāṇakāya* of Vajravārāhī. Like that deity, she is endowed with the thirty-two major signs, and holds a flaying-knife and skull-bowl. She becomes a pupil of Padmākāra, which is indicative of the influence of Nyingma hagiography. In addition, she becomes a pupil of all the eighty-four *mahāsiddhas*.[159] She travels to other Buddha-realms, meets every Buddha, teaches hundreds of thousands of ḍākiṇīs simultaneously, and manifests countless bodies so that she can be the mistress of hundreds *gaṇacakras* at the same time. Her prophecy to Rechungpa is displaced to a subsequent *gaṇacakra* that immediately follows in the narrative.[160]

There is another intrusion into the narrative, reminiscent of that by the Vajravārāhī of Bhagala: *yogins* and *yoginīs,* five in number, mysteriously appear and disappear. This serves as the basis for an admonition to Tibetan practitioners. Tipupa says that these yogins live in a charnel ground and gained their realisation of the *dharmakāya* through blessing alone, without meditation of any kind; he contrasts them with those in Tibet, who run and jump around when they feel transformed by what they only think is a blessing.[161]

As in Möntsepa, Rechungpa insists on leaving for Tibet, anxious to see Milarepa before he dies. But this immediately segues into the Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal version, in which Rechungpa stays on to receive an even longer list of Tipupa's teachings, including the 'Equal Taste' *terma*.[162]

There then follows, as in Lhatsun, the song of farewell that provides a list of teachings. Tipupa sends the same gifts to Milarepa. After declaring Milarepa the best of practitioners in Tibet, Tipupa instructs Rechungpa to study with Asu, thus legitimising Rechungpa's becoming the pupil of another teacher in Tibet.[163]

His journey homewards includes a peculiar episode not seen in other sources. He cures people of sickness caused by a *nāga*. A woman offers herself sexually to him, but he refuses her. She is upset, challenges his views and leaves. Rechungpa then decides to practise sorcery that will liberate her by killing her. Naked except for wearing bone-adornments, and holding a trident, he invokes a storm in which she is killed by lightning.

Her brother, a non-Buddhist, takes revenge by having sorcery practised against Rechungpa, but he dons an elaborate symbolic costume, including a white pointed cap (which was to become his principal iconic marker) and prevents the magic from harming him. He turns the tempest back against the brother, killing him. Not stopping there, he proceeds to liberate through death *seven hundred villages* of non-Buddhists. In honour of this achievement, Rechungpa is given the name Vajracakra ('Wheel of thunderbolts').[164] I think this may be a record for mass-murder in the annals of Tibetan Buddhist history and certainly makes Milarepa's essay into sorcery seem quite insignificant.

In an awkward transposition from its place much earlier in the narrative, it is now that Rechungpa asks who is the great master of Mahāmudrā and is rebuked by an anonymous person for not knowing that it is Asu.[165]

Rechungpa, goes to see Māhakaruṇa *(Ye-rang-pa),* who is normally portrayed as living resident in Nepal, but Götsang Repa has Rechungpa arriving in Nepal *after* meeting him. Māhakaruṇa tells Rechungpa that he obtained his lineage of Vārāhī from Ramaphala (in error for Rāmapāla), a pupil of Maitripa.[166]

Rechungpa, having now returned to Nepal, meets Bharima on the street, but in this version she has come to welcome him. He sings the song in which he appears to interpret her characteristics clairvoyantly, including this time the manner in which she greets him. Rechungpa sings that her manner indicates that she is a pupil of Siddharājñī, who is referred to simply by the respectful title of 'Aunt' (A-*ne*), which in contemporary Tibet is the standard appellation for a nun. In immediate contradiction with this, but in accord with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* when Bharima asks after 'the aunt', Rechungpa, as if he has never heard of her, asks Bharima who Siddharājñī is. Bharima answers that she is a woman who is 500-years old. Rechungpa adds (as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*) that he has seen wondrous things 'such as Vārāhī and the wish-fulfilling cow'. As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and in Lhatsun, Bharima reads Rechungpa's texts and corrects the faults of the translators.[167]

Rechungpa, his status much enhanced in this version, is welcomed by the King and given gifts to take to Milarepa.[168]

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa, the third Drukchen (1478–1523)

The third Drukchen presents this episode as three separate visits:

1 He returns with an offering of gold for Varacandra and receives the remaining Vajrapāni instructions.[169]

2 He receives Vārāhī from Rāmapāla *(Ra-ma-pha-la)* and the thirteen-deity Cakrasaṃvara and the two-faced Vārāhī from Tipupa and Māhakaruṇa *(Ye-rang-pa)*. In this version, it is not until after returning from this second visit that Rechungpa is successful in his practice of *caṇḍalī,* becomes known as Rechungpa, and sings the song of his present happiness.

3 Milarepa sends him to obtain the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma,* though in this version it is only three of the nine that still remain to be obtained. It is not specified which three.

> Therefore, it is on his *fourth* visit to India (the very first was when he was cured by Varacandra) that he receives the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* from Tipupa. Rechungpa also receives the Amitāyus, Jinasāgara and other teachings from the Vārāhī of Bhagala, who is here identified with, or more accurately, conflated with, Siddharājñī.[170]

In this brief description, Bharima and Ma Lotsawa are not mentioned, but there is some information concerning teachers such as Rāmapāla that accords with Götsang Repa.

Sang-gye Darpo (early sixteenth century)

This text merely says that he met Tipupa and Siddharājñī and obtained from them the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* and *Amitāyus*.[171]

Changchub Zangpo (compiled in the sixteenth century)

This passage[172] is a summary, probably based on the same source as that used by Gyadangpa.

Kyitön is not mentioned. There are extracts from Rechungpa's song describing his journey to Nepal, such as the heaps of corpses of plague victims, given in the form of a prose narrative.

There are two Bharimas in this version, dividing between them the narrative of the single Bharima in Gyadangpa (or alternatively, Gyadangpa merged two Bharimas into one). Rechungpa stays with a *younger* Bharima. As a result of injudicious summarizing, no agent is provided for the verb when it is said that this Bharima was taught *Dzogchen,* so that the text could be understood, perversely, to mean that Rechungpa taught her. It is the younger Bharima who then criticises 'Tibetan yogins' (or 'the Tibetan yogin') for meditating on emptiness alone, which will not bring buddhahood, and for ignoring the practice of guru, deity and protector meditations.

Rechungpa then enquires of the *elder* Bharima's servant as to the nature of her practice and, as in Gyadangpa, she strikes a Vajrayoginī pose.

Rechungpa sings to the King, and receives a travel permit for him and seventeen other people[173] (Gyadangpa had twelve).

He returns to Varacandra and the narrative introduces, in this text for the first time, Tipupa (named *Ti-bu* in this version), whom he goes to on Varacandra's advice. However, Tipupa's wife, or consort, informs Tipupa that Rechungpa had visited them on a previous occasion, so that we see the clumsiness of this summary, for the previous visit has been omitted. The two translators present are given the opposite identification to that given by Gyadangpa: Ok Lotsawa (Og Lo-tsā-ba, cf. 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba) is here the bad person, but a good translator, and Ma Lotsawa is the contrary.

With Ok Lotsawa as a semi-villainous translator, the narrative unfolds as in Gyadangpa until the point when Rechungpa is living with Tipupa and his wife.[174] In a vague parallel to the Gyadangpa version, it is said that the guru and his wife quarrel; Ok Lotsawa complains to Rechungpa that it is his fault, but Tipupa's wife comes to his defence, saying he is blameless, which again seems to be the residue of an interesting tale concerning Rechungpa and the consort.[175]

Otherwise, the brief narrative continues as in Gyadangpa, except that Ok Lotsawa is the interpreter for the teachings. The song listing the instructions he received is omitted, but the four-line verse of farewell is included.

Rechungpa returns to Nepal and meets the elder Bharima, and sings her the song interpreting the signs of her body.[176] When Bharima, the elder, invites him to her home, he explains that he is a guest of the younger Bharima, which makes the passage clearer than in Gyadangpa. However, there appears to be an unskilful omission from the narrative flow, for after the elder Bharima has explained that in Nepal it is considered very important not to abandon one's host, Rechungpa is immediately described as going to the elder Bharima's, without the explanation that she goes through the process of formally inviting him to come from the other patroness's home.

Unlike Gyadangpa, where Rechungpa merely obtains more texts from Bharima, but like *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Rechungpa shows Bharima his texts. She complains that where Tipupa had taught at length, Ok Lotsawa, translated only a little, and when Tipupa was brief, Ok had added extra material. Bharima corrects the translations. The languages involved are not mentioned.

Rechungpa offers his remaining gold to both Bharima and to the King before his return to Tibet.[177]

An Ocean of Kagyu Songs (bKa′-brgyud mGur-mtsho) *a.k.a* Rain of Wisdom (Ye-shes char-'bebs) *(compiled circa 1542)*

This anthology of *Kagyu* songs, though compiled after *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* was printed, derives its Rechungpa and Milarepa songs from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* indicating the continued pre-eminence of this text. The single song of Rechungpa included is a verbatim reproduction of the passage in which Rechungpa sings to the King in Nepal.[178]

Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (1504–66) *A Feast for Scholars (mKhas-pa'i dGa'-ston)* (written between 1545 and 1565)

This merely states that Rechungpa was sent by Milarepa to India to obtain four (as in Khachö Wangpo, *The Blue Annals* and *A River of Blessings*) *ḍāka-niṣkāya- dharmas,* and received instruction from Tipupa, Siddharājñī and the Nepalese Māhakaruṇa.[179]

Pema Karpo's (1527–92) *History of the Dharma* (1575)

Pema Karpo's narrative is brief and merely states[180] that Rechungpa met Tipupa. He identifies Ghayadara as his father, but also, oddly, not only calls Tipupa a pupil of Varacandra, but identifies him as being a Paṇḍita Candraprabha (not to be confused with Candragarbha).

The episode of meeting Amoghavajra at the festival, receiving Amitāyus from Siddharājñī and obtaining an eighty-eight year life-span is included.

As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and Götsang Repa, Tipupa prophesies that a ḍākiṇī will correct his texts and make up for Rechungpa's deficiency in not knowing the language (although Rechungpa's problems with the translator is omitted).

A significant evolution in the description of Siddharājñī is that Pema Karpo states that only certain worthy ones were able to see her, as she was invisible to ordinary human beings.[181]

Shamarpa Chökyi Dondrup *(Zhwa-dmar Chos-kyi Don-grub) Amitāyus Abhiṣeka (Tshe-dpag-med gyi dBang-bskur)*

The eighth Shamarpa (1695–1732) was a hierarch of the Karma Kagyu school. In his initiation text for Siddharājñī's Amitāyus he recounts how Rechungpa, on the last of his three visits to India, is sent by Tipupa to a festival where he is told he has seven days to live. In fact, the entire episode is nothing but a summary from Götsang Repa, and refers to Tipupa as Darma Dodé who had previously entered that body through the practice of *purapraveśa*.[182]

Śākya Rinchen (mid-eighteenth century)

This is simply a summary of Götsang Repa, giving identical information, unlike the preceding passage in this text, which used additional sources in describing the circumstances that caused Rechungpa to go to India.

This lineage-history by Śākya Rin-chen also includes a separate biography of Siddharājñī,[183] most of which is based on what is contained in Götsang Repa, thus describing her supernatural birth in the divine realm of Oḍḍiyāna. She is also said to have forms and activities that are beyond human comprehension. The text also identifies her with Niguma, the sister or consort of Nāropa, on the basis of Vanaratna's identification of her tradition's *maṇḍala* of Jinasāgara as belonging to the Niguma tradition. Vanaratna was born in 1384, apparently in eastern Bengal and first came to

Tibet, for the first time in 1426, and the last time in 1453. There he taught, among others, Gö Shönnu Pal, the author of *The Blue Annals*.[184]

But Śākya Rinchen also identifies Siddharājñī as the sister of Ghayadhara, Tipupa's father, thus indeed making her a paternal aunt *(a-ne),* as she was referred to by Bharima in Götsang Repa. However that earlier passage was probably using the term only in an honorific sense, which Śākya Rinchen, may have taken literally. He explains away the resulting inconsistencies in his identification of her by saying she was able to lead multiple lives simultaneously.

Pema Nyinché Wangpo (Padma Nyin-byed dBang-po) the ninth Taisitupa (1774–1853)

The ninth Taisitupa, who was a hierarch of the Karma Kagyu, describes the transmission of the Jinasāgara practice in his initiation text. The practice is traditionally of great importance for the Karma Kagyu because of its association with the Karmapas, the principal hierarchs of the lineage. Rechungpa is portrayed as receiving three separate transmissions of this practice in a fusion of Kagyu and Nyingma traditions. In relation to our narrative, Rechungpa is said to have 'actually' met Siddharājñī on Tipupa's instruction, implying that she did not have a mundane existence that anyone could perceive. She gave him the text of the practice written not in human but in *ḍākinī* script. As Lenchung Lotsawa *(gLan-chung Lo-tsā-ba)* translates it into Tibetan, this probably refers to Text no. 2140 in the Tengyur *(bsTan-'gyur)* (See Appendix 1).

Rechungpa receives another transmission that is not mentioned in any other biography. This was passed on by Maitripa to Vajrapāṇi and then to a Newar named Sumatikīrti who transmitted this initiation to Rechungpa in Nepal.

In *The Blue Annals,* Ngok Loden Sherab *(rNgog Blo-ldan Shes-rab)* is said to have studied under him in Tibet before his visit to Nepal (in the 1790s) to study under Atulyavajra and Varendraruci, a.k.a Hadu Karpo *(Ha-du dKar-po)*.[185]

Sumatikīrti worked on the translation of eight texts[186] with Ngok Loden Sherab, eighteen texts[187] with Marpa Dopa *(Mar-pa Do-pa)* and another text with both Ngok and Marpa Dopa together.[188]

Sumatikīrti gave Rechungpa the initiation at the Ratnavikrama *(Rin-chen-tshul)* temple. In Lhatsun's biography of Tsangnyön Heruka, *Rin-chen-tshul* is also named Thang Bihari. This is the Tham Bahil or Tam Vihara in the present-day Thamel area of Kathmandu. Also known as Vikramaśila[189] it was founded, or re-founded, by Atiśa Dipaṃkara in 1040. It was the residence of Cha Lotsawa during his thirteenth-century stay in the Kathmandu valley and appears to have been a popular residence for Tibetans, for in the Tsangnyön Heruka biography it is also referred to as 'the Tibetan Thang Temple' *(bod thang dgon pa)*.[190] As stated in Götsang Repa, it was in this area of Khatmandu, known as Yambu, that Tibetans stayed.

The third transmission is a Nyingma *terma* transmission of which there is also no mention in the biographies. It is said that Nyangral Mikyö Dorje *(Nyang-ral Mi-bskyod rDo-rje)* transmitted this to Rechungpa. Mikyö Dorje received it from his father, the discoverer of this 'hidden treasure'.[191] This was Nyangral Nyima Özer *(Nyang-ral Nyi-*

ma '*Od-zer)* (1124–92), one of the most famous early *tertön (gter-ston)*. However, as we can see from his dates, this transmission is entirely fanciful as he post-dates Rechungpa.

The Great Garland of Gold (gSer-phreng Chen-mo) *(complied after 1838)*

Unfortunately, *The Great Garland of Gold,* which is closely related to Gyadangpa and also to *The Garland of Wish-Fulling Jewels,* does not have this part of the narrative, principally because it does not contain a biography of Rechungpa.

Guru Tashi's Dharma History (Gu-bkra'i Chos-'byung)

This text is a Nyingma history and indicates how Rechungpa is assimilated into that tradition. It states[192] that he went to India three times, thus agreeing with Götsang Repa. It then gives Siddharājñī a Nyingma identity by stating that she is Mandarava, Padmākara's Indian consort from before his eighth-century visit to Tibet. She is said to be 'also known' as Siddharājñī. In agreement with Pema Karpo, further enhancing her divine nature, it is said that she was perceived by Rechungpa, but could not be perceived by others, and therefore the teachings that he received from her are classed within the 'Pure Vision' *(dag-snang)* class of revealed teachings. This differs from *termas,* which are the discovery of previously concealed teaching, whether physically concealed in the ground as *sater* (*sa-gter,* 'earth treasures'), or within one's mind in a previous life, and called *gongter* (*dgongs-gter,* 'mind treasues'). It also states that Rechungpa received from Siddharājñī, in addition to Amitāyus, the practices of Mahākaruṇika (i.e. Jinasāgara, the red Avalokiteśvara in union with a consort) and Hayagrīva. Jinasāgara in particular is a practice widespread amongst Tibetan traditions that trace their origin back to Siddharājñī and Rechungpa, and yet it does not feature in the preceding Rechungpa hagiographies at all.

8
THE YAK HORN AND THE BURNING TEXTS

Introduction

This episode, in its well-known version in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* portrays a conflict between a rebellious Rechungpa and Milarepa. It is a significant factor in the present perception of Rechungpa as a gifted but seriously flawed pupil who was secondary to Gampopa.

There are basically three versions of this episode:

1 There is a group of five texts, including Gyadangpa, which the others appear to be based upon. Among these, *The Kagyu Garland of Wish-fulfilling Jewels* and *The Great Golden Garland* do not touch upon this episode. Gyadangpa, Möntsepa and Changchub Zangpo correspond closely, with Gyadangpa suffering the least from summarisation. This narrative tradition was the basis for the developments found in Group 3.
2 *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara* and *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* are unique variants related to, but not dependent on Group 1.
3 *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and its descendants intensified the dramatic and miraculous aspects in the narrative, in particular by introducing the yak horn incident.

The key feature in the plot of this episode is a volume of texts that Rechungpa brings back to Tibet and that Milarepa burns. The volume is referred to as a *beubum (be'u-bum)*. This is a general term for what could be loosely termed a 'manual', in that it is a collection of useful instructions. For example, collections of early Kadampa instructions were known as *beubum*.[1] Latterly, however, the term has become associated with magical rites, from the beneficial, such as healing, to those for causing death.[2]

The different narratives disagree as to what the contents of Rechungpa's burned *beubum* were, and therefore Milarepa's motive for burning it.

Group 1: The Gyadangpa tradition

Gyadangpa (after 1256)

Gyadangpa states that while Rechungpa was en route from Kathmandu to Nyanam *(sNya-nam),* he obtained 'the largest *beubum*' from a patroness at a place named Minshing *(Min-shing)* in Gyadangpa and Menshing *(Men-zhing)* in the *Demchok Nyengyu Biographies* reproduction.[3]

On his arrival in Tibet, Milarepa came to greet him. In response to Rechungpa's asking after his welfare, Milarepa sings a short song listing the meditation practices that have brought him happiness.[4]

Milarepa asks Rechungpa about India and he sings about the instructions that he received there.[5] He gives his *beubum* to Milarepa, which here appears to mean a collection of *all* the texts that Rechungpa has accumulated in India and Nepal. Milarepa starts walking swiftly to Tröpuk cave *(Brod-phug),* while Rechungpa follows, unable to keep up. Gyadangpa says that Rechungpa sang a 'running song' as he followed Milarepa.[6] The song itself is supplied in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* group of texts.

On arrival at Tröpuk Cave, Milarepa sends Rechungpa to get fresh water, saying the nearby water is no good, though he has had to use it in Rechungpa's absence. Milarepa stays behind to light a fire. He prays for the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas* to separate themselves from the other texts and throws the *beubum* onto the fire. The *ḍāka-niṣkāya* teachings float up into a crack in the cave wall and the rest of the texts burn. When Rechungpa returns, he believes that *all* the texts have been burned, and cannot understand why, as Milarepa had sent him to obtain them in the first place. He asks Milarepa why he has done this, and Milarepa replies with a song that emphasises the path of meditation, expressing his concern that the numerous teachings in the *beubum* would result in Rechungpa becoming a master of scholarly terminology. For example, he sings that a meditator should wear out a hole in his cushion, but studying the *beubum* would result in his becoming a scholar who wears out holes in his shoes. He sings that one should understand all through mastering one practice, while the scholarship of the burned texts would result in a fruitless knowledge of everything. It is evident that in this narrative, the manuals were works of scholarship and not sorcery. In Gyadangpa there had never been any mention of sorcery as a possible instruction that Rechungpa intended to obtain in India, only the patrons' misconception that Rechungpa was being sent to learn logic.

Milarepa ends his song with the words:

Do not be angry, [for that] will burn your being.
Do not suffer, [for that] destroys the mind.
If you wish to practise, [know that] the instructions
Flew like a bird and disappeared into the rock.
If [I] pray [for them] they will return.[7]

Milarepa calls for them and they reappear; Rechungpa thinks, 'This was a sign that [those texts] were either harmful or without benefit', and his mind was completely set at ease.[8]

Later, Seben Repa *(Se-ban Ras-pa),* still playing the role of the envious fool (earlier in the biography, he had thrown a bowl of beer at Drigom Repa in a fit of jealous rage over Rechungpa), repeats the complaint that the patrons made before Rechungpa was sent to India, wrongly assuming that Rechungpa was sent there to learn debate. He claims that their community *already* knows how to debate, so that Rechungpa's journey was pointless. However, when Milarepa challenges his pupils to explain what kind of refutations they would employ, they are unable to answer. Rechungpa then sings of a refutation of ignorance and other mental states that is accomplished purely by the practice of the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas.* Rechungpa thus dismisses the scholastic approach, and a pleased Milarepa gives him his approval.

We therefore see in this version a minimum of friction between the guru and pupil, and Rechungpa, who had never intended to learn logic, was never seduced into studying it, and on the contrary is well aware of its limitations. Neither is there any mention of the practice of sorcery. Rechungpa's return to Tibet establishes his supremacy amongst Milarepa's pupils.

Möntsepa (written between circa 1450 and 1475)

Möntsepa, in an unskilful summary, omits Rechungpa's obtaining the *beubum,* but adds that Rechungpa left many texts with the patroness Leksé *(Legs-se),* and then brought eleven *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharma* and other texts to Milarepa. Perhaps the intended meaning had been that Rechungpa obtained many texts that were in Leksé's possession, for that would accord with Gyadangpa's unnamed patroness.[9]

The subsequent meeting and burning of the texts is as in Gyadangpa, apart from some additional dialogue. When Rechungpa sees that his texts have been burned and Milarepa asks, 'Are you unhappy?' Rechungpa replies, 'I am unhappy'.[10] There is a little variation in the songs, but the rest, including Rechungpa's song on refutation, is as in Gyadangpa.

Changchub Zangpo (compiled in the sixteenth century)

A crude summary of Gyadangpa's source, Changchub Zangpo obscurely states that Rechungpa obtained a *beubum* from a brother or male cousin *(ming-po cig).*[11] However, this may well be a corruption of a toponym such as Minshing *(Min-shing).*

Milarepa declares that he knows Rechungpa is coming and goes to greet him. In Milarepa's song of happiness there are additional practices to those listed in Gyadangpa and Möntsepa, such as 'happy in the non-duality of *purapraveśa (grong-'jug)*',[12] which contrasts with the popular Tibetan view that the transmission of this practice ended with Marpa's son. Rechungpa's brief song to Milarepa is a variant related to that in Gyadangpa.[13] On their return to the cave, Milarepa tells Rechungpa that he has been made ill by the nearby water, but had not mentioned it before so as not to upset him. This reference to physical vulnerability is avoided in Tsangnyön's version. The narrative from this point on is the same as in Gyadangpa and Möntsepa. The song on Rechungpa's return to the cave is more similar to Gyadangpa's than Möntsepa's version, though it has its own variations, including a final additional line: '[Too] many teachings will become *māras*.'[14]

The song on debate is the same as in Gyadangpa, but Seben Repa's initial objection is omitted.

Group 2: *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* (compiled after fourteenth century) and *The Golden Garland of Ralung* (compiled circa 1799–1803)

This briefly describes that when Rechungpa, on his return from India, relates to Milarepa what he has learned, Milarepa becomes worried that Rechungpa, instead of becoming one who 'through knowing one thing is liberated from all' (in *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* version, while in the *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage,* it is 'through knowing one thing is *learned* in all'), will become one who 'knows all but is incapable of anything'.[15] He sends Rechungpa for water. *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* simply states that Milarepa burns the texts. *The Golden Garland of Ralung* adds an element that is probably derived from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative tradition, particularly as found in *A River of Blessings,* namely, Rechungpa, having gone for water, watches the marvel of 100 kyang (Tibetan wild asses) and their young playing together.

On Rechungpa's return, he thinks that all his texts have been destroyed and so *he returns to India*. Thus, unlike the Gyadangpa version, as Rechungpa had clearly avoided teachings on logic, it is the *ḍāka-niṣkāya* teachings themselves that Milarepa has, inexplicably, destroyed.

The *Golden Garland of Ralung* version adds that Rechungpa thinks, 'Whatever the guru does is excellent,' and realises that the kyang he had been watching were Milarepa's manifestations; however, it does not explain why the destruction of the texts was such a good idea, for, as in *Biographies,* Rechungpa sets off on what is a fourth visit to India to receive the teachings once more. On this visit, in both texts, only the Vajravārāhī, Cakrasaṃvara and Māhamudrā instructions are specifically listed, but he is said to have received the complete *sampannakrama* instructions, which should therefore include the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas.* *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* adds that he received

'the equal taste' *(ro-snyoms)* and other teachings, which appears to indicate the influence of the 'Equal Taste' terma tradition upon the narrative.

When he returns to Tibet, some monks from Purang *(sPu-rangs)* offer Rechungpa gold to take them to his great teachers in India. Rechungpa sells the land and building that he owned in his homeland; and what he has no right to sell he gives to the teacher who taught him to read. Earlier in the narrative, this man was said to be from Ü and to have been the teacher of Rechungpa's father. No reference is made to his mother and uncle, who were mentioned briefly earlier in the narrative. The implication is that they had passed away by this time.

The monks are not mentioned again in *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage,* but *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* specifies that he took them with him to meet Tipupa on what in both texts is his fifth visit. It is at this point that Rechungpa sings to Tipupa of the hardships he underwent in order to come. This song is a variant of the one that in the Gyadangpa narrative was sung on Rechungpa's first request for teachings from Tipupa. *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* only mentions the name of the song, while *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* gives it in full.

This version of the song divides the journey into five parts. The first is reaching the road that leads to Nepal, which involves going through forests and over swaying bamboo bridges. The second part is a descent to the dark Sing-ga forest, where there are robbers and piles of bodies higher than manure heaps. The last detail may have bled upwards from the description of plague-ridden Nepal in the other versions of this song. The third part is travelling across the two passes of Dzongka (*rDzong-dkar,* which is not to be confused with the town near Rechungpa's birthplace, though it may have supplied the name) where the plague is fierce and again bodies are piled higher than manure heaps; it is a place where there are more toll-men than hairs on the head, and he has to pay them more than he has ever paid anyone. The fourth part is travelling across to the centre of Nepal (i.e. the Kathmandu valley), which in this version is devoid of plague, for he lists only religious sights, such as Svayambhū Stūpa and the 'conduct of Śilabhabho', which is probably a corruption of Śīlabharo. The fifth part is the journey to Mithila, where Tipupa lives in a place named *Shing-spang gSer-gyi Maṇḍal,* where he also sees Siddharājñī and 'the Vārāhī of Kumata *(sKu-ma-ta)*'.

This is the only Rechungpa narrative tradition that lists five visits, and therefore is presumably the source for *The Red Annals* and *The Great Chronicle of India and Tibet,* which also mention five visits, though without specifying what they consisted of.[16]

On this final visit, he receives all of Tipupa's teachings before returning to Tibet. There is no further clarification of Milarepa's reasons for having previously burned the texts, nor any description of his reaction to Rechungpa's other two visits. Both texts merely state that Rechungpa was Milarepa's attendant for 'many years'.[17] They add that Rechungpa was in his twelfth year when he met Milarepa (which would be circa 1095) and, according to the *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* only, in his fortieth year (circa 1123) when he left Milarepa to go to Ü. This confirms that the spurious chronology in the narrative of Amitāyus transmission (in which Rechungpa is in his forty-fourth year when in India) was not universally believed.

Group 3: *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* tradition

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje

This version has the principal ingredients for the popular version of Rechungpa's return to Tibet. *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* had provided Rechungpa with a faulty motivation for going to India: a desire to learn logic. In this passage he compounds his error by meeting a non-Buddhist *(tīrthika)* after leaving Bharima. This master is very keen to help Rechungpa spread his teachings—in exchange for a payment of gold.[18] *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* contradicts itself here, however, for it had earlier portrayed him as giving all his remaining gold to Tipupa before his homeward journey. Rechungpa learns a range of magical practices (that seem, however, particularly Tibetan) including causing hailstorms, sickness and death, and preventing the death of children. The implication will be that it is not logic but these sorcery teachings, clumsily introduced into the narrative, which will form the unwelcome part of Rechungpa's texts.

Meanwhile, Milarepa is at Dramar Chonglung *(Brag-dmar mChong-lung)*[19] and not the Nyenam *(sNye-nam)* of Gyadangpa. He clairvoyantly sees Rechungpa within a crystal stūpa. Rechungpa's image becomes obscured by a dust storm as a result of his receiving instructions from the non-Buddhist. Milarepa goes to meet him on the empty plain of Palmo Palthang (*dPal-mo dPal-thang;* the Newark manuscript has the erroneous *dPa'-mo dPa'-thang*).

Rechungpa bows down to Milarepa but expects Milarepa to bow to him in return, which he does not. At this point, as in Gyadangpa,[20] Rechungpa enquires about Milarepa's welfare and Milarepa sings a song of his happiness that concludes by asking Rechungpa if he has been successful.[21] This first song is entirely different and far longer than that in Gyadangpa, but a variant of the Gyadangpa song will appear a little further on in this text.[22] This is an example of the creation of two different songs upon the same theme.

After Milarepa's first song, the text returns to the theme of the prostration that was not performed by Milarepa. Rechungpa explains that if Milarepa does not pay homage 'stupid Tibetan villagers' *(bod blun po'i grong khyer mi)*[23] will have no faith in the *ḍāka-niṣkāya-dharmas*. Without any response from Milarepa, Rechungpa sings of his journey to India[24] with a song that is, as with Milarepa's, different from that found in Gyadangpa at this point, though the first two lines of the songs are related.

At this point (probably as the result of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* combining two different versions of the meeting) there is a superfluous repetition of narrative: Rechungpa enquires after Milarepa's welfare a second time and Milarepa replies with an extended version of the corresponding Gyadangpa song,[25] listing more practices.[26] The Changchub Zangpo version also included more practices in its version of this song, such as the *pura-praveśa,* but in contrast to Changchub Zangpo's 'happy in the non-duality of *pura-praveśa'* [27] for example, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* has, 'happy in the *pura-praveśa* that is like discarding and putting on a snake-skin' *(grong jug sbrul lpags dor len bde)*.[28]

In reply to this, Rechungpa sings the song of the teachings he has obtained in India;[29] this is a development of his song in Gyadangpa.[30] Milarepa's response differs from that in Gyadangpa, for he thinks that Rechungpa has become proud. The principal focus of the rest of this passage is Milarepa's deliberate humbling of Rechungpa, a theme that is not found in the Gyadangpa or *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* versions. Milarepa sings a song to break Rechungpa's pride, warning of the different kinds of ruin that can befall a practitioner.[31]

As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa gives his texts to Milarepa who sets off ahead, with Rechungpa following and unable to keep up. *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* adds that Rechungpa is worried that Milarepa is displeased, and if he does not keep up with him he might give his texts away to someone who will not make good use of them. Unlike Gyadangpa, who merely said that he sang while running, *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* provides an entire song; saying he was already running when he began singing. The song is a description of the teachings, practices and blessed objects that he has brought to Tibet for Milarepa. In contradiction with the narrative, however, the refrain is a plea for Milarepa to accept his offerings, although Milarepa has already taken them. The final verse is a plaintive request for 'the supreme gift' of rest, food, drink and kind words.[32]

The song has the effect of making Milarepa wait for Rechungpa. He sings Rechungpa a song on the dangers of discord between 'father and son',[33] and establishes his own superiority over Rechungpa with unfounded, extravagant claims:

I have a more profound relationship
With Tipu Mantravṛkṣa than you do.
If the secret words of the *mātṛkās* and *ḍākiṇīs*
Were kept secret from me, who else could they be taught to?
There is no better pupil
Of Ekamātṛkā Siddharājñī than I.
I have consumed many gaṇacakras
At 'The Golden Maṇḍala of Trees and Pasture' *(Shing-spangs gSer-gyi Maṇḍala)*.

He concludes by exhorting him not to be arrogant and to meditate in the solitude of the mountains.[34] The chapter ends with Rechungpa convinced of Milarepa's clairvoyance and wisdom and asking to go wherever Milarepa wishes.

They set off across Palmo Palthang, a plain that previously appeared in Donmo Ripa when Milarepa carried the young Rechungpa across it.[35] In contrast with descriptions of, Rechungpa as enlightened, here he has 'evil thoughts', resenting the poor welcome he has received. Milarepa tells Rechungpa to pick up a yak horn they come across, which Rechungpa does, even though he protests that it will be of no use to them. They are later caught in a sudden, severe hailstorm in which there are hailstones the size of one's hand. Rechungpa throws away the horn and sits covering his head with his robe. He cannot see

Milarepa anywhere, but then hears him singing, the voice coming from inside the yak horn. He tries to pick it up, but it is as if glued to the ground. He looks inside and sees Milarepa in there, even though his body has not grown any smaller. Milarepa sings,[36] 'It is pleasant in the narrow end of the mighty castle of the yak horn,' *(mkhar btsan*[37] *po g.yag ru'i phug*[38] *la*[39] *skyid)* where he is practising the *yantra-yoga* exercises (which include jumping and landing in the full cross-legged posture). His song criticises the defects in Rechungpa's understanding, meditation and conduct and invites him into his 'house' *(khyim)*.[40] Rechungpa attempts to, but cannot even get his hand inside. Rechungpa sings a song of supplication[41] and Milarepa comes out of the horn. The sky clears and they sit in the sun.

This is followed by another episode not found in Gyadangpa: Rechungpa believes that Milarepa caused the hailstorm to punish him for having learned sorcery in India. He complains about this to Milarepa and asks that they go begging for alms, for he is hungry. Milarepa denies responsibility for the storm and declares that it is an inappropriate time to beg for alms. Rechungpa insists, so Milarepa says they should beg from a large tent in the distance. Rechungpa demands that they go to a nearby, small tent instead. Milarepa concedes but is again proved right, for the old lady in the tent abuses them for begging in the afternoon. They go away empty-handed and Milarepa commands that they must go without food that evening.

The next morning they find that the encampment has moved on, but the old lady has died in the night, as a result of having abused a holy man. Milarepa makes Rechungpa carry the body some distance, even though Rechungpa is worried about spiritual pollution *(grib)* from contact with a corpse. Milarepa places his staff on the corpse's heart, sings of impermanence and then says they should go into the mountains.[42] Rechungpa, still fatigued from his journey, pleads to stay at a nearby comfortable hermitage. This plea introduces a song and counter-song between Milarepa and Rechungpa on the theme of abandoning all material concerns.[43]

The next part of this episode—the burning of the texts—begins with their arrival at Dramar Chong *(Brag-dmar mChong),* situated between Dingri *(Ding-ri)* and Nyenam *(Nye-snam),* and not at Gyadangpa's Tröpuk cave *(Brod-phug)* in Nyenam.

In Gyadangpa, Milarepa said that the local water was bad for his health. Here Milarepa specifies that it is bad for his eyes, and sends Rechungpa to get 'healing water' *(gso-chu)*.[44] After Rechungpa's departure, Milarepa lights a fire, places the two text-boards on his right and left, and then, as in Gyadangpa, prays for the *dāka-niṣkāya* texts to float into a crack in the cave wall, but also prays that the non-Buddhist sorcery will float into the fireplace.[45]

A wondrous sight delays Rechungpa's return. In this version, he sees seven kyang (the Tibetan wild ass), comprising a mother and her young, and seven wolves, also a mother with her young, playing together. He watches them until they disappear into the distance. When he hurries back he sees that his texts have been burned. Unlike Gyadangpa, Rechungpa loses his faith in Milarepa and turns his back on him. Milarepa performs a succession of five miracles with accompanying songs, but to no avail:

1 The gurus of the lineage appear above his head.
2 A crystal stupa appears on his tongue.
3 The nine Hevajra deities appear in his heart.
4 Milarepa splits and moulds a boulder as if it were clay.
5 He uses his robe as wings and flies high into the sky.[46]

Rechungpa is unmoved by these miracles and after the first song states that he would rather watch kyang and wolves playing.[47] In this text, the narrative function of these animals is to serve as a counterpoint to Milarepa's miracles. Milarepa refers to them in his songs, saying that his display is better than watching animals. There is no indication that they were magical creations by Milarepa; he even derides them by singing, for example, that 'the kyang are [just] ghosts in the mountains, and wolves are [their] karmic executioners' *(rkyang ni ri'i*[48] *'byung po yin/spyang ku*[49] *las kyi shan pa yin)*[50] and 'the stupid kyang family bring the meat, the sinful wolf family make relationships with corpses, and those who watch them are hunters' *(rkyang ma*[51] *smad glen pa sha sky el yin/spyang ma*[52] *smad sdig*[53] *pa*[54] *ro sbrel yin/ de la lta ba rngon pa yin)*.[55]

Milarepa disappears into the sky and Rechungpa, overcome with regret, recovers his faith in him. In what seems to be narrative repetition as a result of compilation, Milarepa reappears in the sky before Rechungpa, sings to him, and vanishes once more,[56] this time 'going through a rock fissure of Chonglung *(mChong-lung)* that only a bird could pass through, and he could not be seen anywhere' *(mchong lung gi brag seb na*[57] *by a min pas*[58] *mi thar*[59] *ba cig tu by on nas*[60] *song bas gar yod yang mi mthong bar*[61] *'dug pas)*[62] and Rechungpa is again overcome with remorse.

Rechungpa wishes to die now that Milarepa has disappeared, but decides it is wrong to commit suicide by jumping to his death. Instead, he prays to die accidentally as a punishment from Milarepa and climbs the cliff to provide the opportunity for an accident. Near the top, he comes across a cave in which there are three Milarepas, who in a song ask him to repent his conduct.[63] Then the scene magically transforms into Rechungpa sitting by Milarepa next to the ashes of the texts.

Thus *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative resorts to an abrupt return to the original narrative framework into which the miraculous episodes have been inserted. Milarepa tells him that sorcery is only beneficial for this life, and was worried that he might become a sorcerer. There was no greater sorcerer than himself, but that had caused him much difficulty until he had purified himself of those actions. He admonishes Rechungpa for learning sorcery from a non-Buddhist, and sings the song[64] that in Gyadangpa Milarepa sang on Rechungpa's return to the cave.[65] The song betrays its origin by agreeing with the Gyadangpa narrative in saying that Rechungpa has brought back a manual of logic, and not sorcery. As in Gyadangpa, Rechungpa is filled with faith on hearing the song, a sign that the preceding passages where he is freed from his doubts and regains his faith were insertions. The texts fly back into his lap and he realises that Milarepa is a Buddha. In an additional detail, Rechungpa says he has been Milarepa's attendant for sixteen years and vows to continue for a further sixteen. The text states that from then on Milarepa and Rechungpa were inseparable.[66] If their intial meeting was around 1096/7, that would place this event at around 1112/3, about ten years before Milarepa's death, therefore a further sixteen years, unless it was meant to be purely an intention, was not possible.

The following chapter in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* is related to the Gyadangpa type narratives, though it omits Seben Repa's criticisms, replacing them with awed deference: Seben Repa and Drigom Repa *('Bri-sgom Ras-pa)* discuss the Dharma with each other, but lack the confidence to discuss it with Rechungpa. Milarepa instructs Rechungpa to tell them whether he can refute Tibetan debaters by using the instructions he received in India. Rechungpa sings of refutation that is accomplished through meditation. Milarepa, pleased, gives him the name Tsöpa Dokpay Rinchen (rTsod-pa Zlog-pa'i Rin-chen), which means 'The Jewel of the Refutation of Debate'.[67]

The clash of wills introduced by *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* may seem too extreme for the context and it does contrast with every other Tibetan account of a guru-pupil relationship; but it is this extreme nature which has given such a long life and popularity to this version.

Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo

Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo (1350–1405) includes a summary of a narrative that predates *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* in terms of narrative development and represents an early stage of the interpolation of the miracles into the Gyadangpa type narrative.

The passage is very brief.[68] Milarepa clairvoyantly knows that Rechungpa has developed 'a little pride' and goes to meet him. It is specifically stated that Milarepa miraculously causes the storm, though it is a rainstorm in this instance, not a hailstorm.

Milarepa sings in the horn, but only the first eight lines are provided, beginning 'Son, your view is like a vulture/A vulture is sometimes high and sometimes low' *(Bu khyod kyi lta ba rgod pa 'dra/rGod po res mga' mtho' la res mga' dma')*.[69] These are close equivalents to lines thirteen to nineteen[70] of the thirty-three line song in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* which suggests that the first eleven lines of that version is a later addition.

The narrative, without describing Milarepa exiting the horn, jumps to their arrival at the cave, where Milarepa sends Rechungpa for water. Milarepa burns the texts while Rechungpa is watching kyang and their young playing with wolves. The texts burned are said to include Indian black magic texts. Rechungpa's texts have not been previously mentioned in this narrative, as the entire episode of Rechungpa in India was not described, as this version is a selective summary.

Rechungpa is said to be only a *little* displeased on discovering his texts are gone just as earlier he was only a *little* proud, thus diminishing both negative features.

Milarepa tells Rechungpa that there is nothing marvellous about the kyang and proceeds to manifest a series of nine miracles, only the first of which is provided with a song, and that is only an extract.

1 The first miracle resembles that in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* for the gurus of his lineage appear above the crown of Milarepa's head. The following miracles, which are merely listed as 'various miracles' appear at:
2 the point in-between the eyebrows;
3 the throat;
4 the heart;
5 the navel and

6 the genital area; in other words these miracles take place at the locations of the six *cakras*.
7 The seventh miracle is levitating into the air, which appears to correspond to the final miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* when Milarepa disappeared.
8 The eighth miracle is squeezing and destroying a boulder, which corresponds with the fourth miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.
9 The ninth miracle appears to correspond to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* multiplication of Milarepa into the three forms of himself that Rechungpa encounters after he had thought Milarepa was gone forever. Here, Milarepa, without having first vanished into the sky, multiplies himself on the surface of a vast lake, and subsequently these manifestations are absorbed into three Milarepas and then into one.

Then they are back at the cave in a sudden jump in the narrative, as occurs in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Rechungpa now has strong faith in Milarepa, and we are given the first four lines of a song by Milarepa that expresses his concern that the texts would have caused Rechungpa to become a logician. Thus, Shamarpa displays the same dichotomy concerning the text's content—condemned as sorcery, yet described in song as dedicated to logic—as we have seen in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. This song states:

> Rechungpa, the son that I have brought up since he was little, [I] have the hope that [you will be] a meditator who wears a hole in his cushion, But as a result of the prolixity of this text There is the danger that [you will be] a scholar who wears holes in his shoes.[71]

These four lines are in Gyadangpa as well as reappearing in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Shamarpa's version does not have the extensive development that has taken place in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version of the song (though they both share the addition of the word 'Son' *(bu)*). This demonstrates that they are independent variations from the Gyadangpa type tradition and points to the Shamarpa text as being an instance of an earlier stage of narrative development than *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

The passage ends abruptly at this point, simply stating that Rechungpa's pride had been eliminated.

Thus, though Shamarpa has the interpolation of miraculous episodes into a Gyadangpa type narrative, it does not accentuate Rechungpa's failings or the guru-pupil conflict to the extent that *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* does.

A River of Blessings

In *A River of Blessings* this episode primarily repeats *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* verbatim. The lost *A Dark Treasury,* one of the text's three main sources, does not appear to have provided it with any additional information and the yak horn episode is absent from Shamarpa and therefore it may not be in *A Dark Treasury*. The narrative in this part of the text is identical to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* apart from minor variations and textual corruption, until the conclusion of the yak horn episode.[72] The first narrative

deviation from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* comes after the hailstorm and Milarepa's denial of responsibility for it, and is an alternative narrative to the yak horn story. This and parts of the subsequent narrative seem to be from the colourful, untitled biography of Milarepa that is the lost third source listed by *A River of Blessings,* which may be by Shiché Ripa *(Zhi-byed Ri-pa)* and was called *A Dark Treasury*. Milarepa sits with his back to the stem of a yellow flower, sheltering under its blossom as if it were a parasol. He asks Rechungpa to join him there, saying, 'If there is room for the mind, there's room for the body; we, father and son, should sing together under this flower parasol.'[73]

There is then an abrupt jump to the point where Milarepa and Rechungpa sing the song and counter-song concerning abandoning all material concerns, which in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* was sung *after* the death of the old lady.[74] No further mention is made of the flower. It is not even stated whether Rechungpa joined him there or not. It is clearly a pleasant fragment that the compiler could not resist from crudely introducing. Their approach to the tents is probably also derived from the same lost source, for it contains a unique description of the environs, including sheep and cattle around the tents and children playing on the bank of a river. Unlike *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* it is Milarepa who wishes to go begging, and Rechungpa who disagrees, because night is falling. Milarepa insists that the encampment might leave before morning so it is best to go there immediately. The rest is as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* apart from the detail of the old lady having a bamboo cane and stones in both hands.[75] After her death, there is a song on impermanence that is not found in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje;* it uses many natural examples, and is probably derived from the lost source.[76] Milarepa, to Rechungpa's exasperation, says that it's an old man's job to eat the food of the dead and a young man's job to carry the body.[77]

After the body has been carried onto the plain, Milarepa states that the dead woman had the same selfish viewpoint as a dog, and sings the same song on impermanence as is found in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.[78] *A River of Blessings,* however, adds that on the conclusion of the song, rainbow light touched her body as her consciousness was transferred.

The rest of the episode continues as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* until their arrival in the cave,[79] where we discover yet another variation on the text-burning episode.

Rechungpa had not given all his texts to Milarepa but had secretly kept one for himself, which he keeps under his pillow. Milarepa becomes aware of it and thinks there must be a reason why Rechungpa is hiding it, so one morning, 'when enough snow to whiten the earth had fallen',[80] Mila asks Rechungpa whether he would prefer to light the fire or get the water. Rechungpa says he will get the water and takes two horns to use as vessels. Milarepa meditates and snaps is fingers, which causes the spring to dry up. When Rechungpa returns with this news, Milarepa says that as Rechungpa has promised to perform this task, he will have to go to the river, which is far away. This version, probably from Shiché Ripa, has thus taken the place of the motif of nearby water causing Milarepa health problems, as found in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

Milarepa manifests the animals that Rechungpa sees and their number is greater: 100 kyang give birth to 100 young, and then 100 wolves give birth to 100 wolf cubs; the kyang and their new-born run away, chased by the wolves. Then the mother-wolves sit

and watch the kyang chase the wolf cubs back. Then the wolf cubs chase the young kyang. Rechungpa is amazed by both the unseasonal birth and the strange activity, and does not notice the passing of time.

Meanwhile, Milarepa investigates Rechungpa's text and discovers many sorcery practices. He thinks, 'Oh, my son, whom I hoped would become a meditator who wears a hole in his cushion, is going to become a red-handed executioner! If all these evil mantras are disseminated in Tibet it will ruin many people.'[81] Faintly echoing *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* where Milarepa placed one text cover on either side of himself, here he prays that any beneficial writings in the text should land on the right and the harmful on the left. He then throws the pages into the air and they fall into these two piles. Milarepa then tosses the left-hand pile onto the fire, while praying that anything beneficial amongst them may not burn. As a result, some pages are burned on one side only, with the writing on the other side remaining unharmed. Milarepa puts those partially burned pages from the fire and the entire right-hand pile, together comprising roughly half of the original amount, back in-between the text covers, and rebinds the volume in cloth. Merely through the power of his mental visualisation, the text floats away, not into the cave wall—as was the case in Gyadangpa and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*—but to another location entirely, which is named Drakar Samling *(Brag-dkar bSam-gling)*. However, perhaps as a result of splicing together two narratives, there is an internal contradiction in the narrative; Milarepa is now said to have performed this act upon all the texts that Rechungpa brought, whereas it had earlier been stated that Rechungpa had already given most of them to Milarepa and this was the one he kept to himself. Having burned the texts, Milarepa, with ashes on his hair, goes to lie on his bed. Rechungpa returns and sees the smoke and ashes. Milarepa asks him where he has been all this time. Rechungpa tells him about the animals, looks under his pillow, becomes furious and sits with his back turned to Milarepa.[82]

Milarepa says he can put on a better show than the kyang. There follows a sequence of miracles that differs from that in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. There are a total of three additional miracles and all the accompanying songs are longer variants, perhaps derived from Shiché Ripa.

1 The gurus of the lineage appear above Milarepa's head. After the song, Rechungpa reaffirms his wish to learn sorcery and says that he will return to India, learn it and use it against Galo *(dGa-lo)* and Lotön *(Lo-ston)*.[83]
2 An additional miracle not found in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje:* Rainbow lights fill the sky and offering goddesses appear from the tips of light-rays. The planets act as pillars, the lunar asterisms as a canopy and the gurus appear beneath it.[84] The accompanying song is a variant of that which accompanied the crystal stūpa in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.
3 Corresponding to the crystal stūpa miracle of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* a golden stūpa adorned with turquoises appears upon Milarepa's tongue. An entirely new song accompanies this miracle.[85]
4 Corresponding to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* third miracle, Milarepa cuts open his own chest with a knife in order to reveal not only Hevajra but also Guhyasamāja and Cakrasaṃvara within. A new song accompanies this miracle.[86]

5 In an additional miracle, Milarepa cuts open his own stomach, in order to reveal within it the Indian areas sacred to Cakrasaṃvara: the twenty-four *pīṭha (yul)* and the thirty-eight *kṣetra (gnas)*.[87] A new song accompanies this miracle.[88]
6 Milarepa opens his robe and reveals within it the most famous buddha-realms and their inhabitants. Rechungpa, however, complains that Milarepa has been training in optical illusions and repeats his wish to practise sorcery against the scholar-monks.[89]
7 In an equivalent to the eighth miracle in Shamarpa and the fourth miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Milarepa asks Rechungpa to come down to the lake, promising that he will give him back his texts there. But when they get there, Milarepa rides a boulder, as if it were a horse. Then he squeezes it, as if it was clay, and finally shatters it with a kick. A song that is a variant of the one in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* accompanies the miracle. Rechungpa is now convinced that these are not mere illusions, but he still wishes to return to India. There follows a song unaccompanied by a miracle.[90]
8 The equivalent of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje's* fifth and last miracle: Milarepa tells Rechungpa that the texts are in the rock wall of Drak Samyé *(Brag bSam-ye),* previously referred to as Drakar Samling *(Brag-dkar bSam-gling)*. When they reach the summit of that place, Milarepa flies off, using his robe as wings, singing a song that is a variant of the one in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.[91]

Rechungpa goes in search of Milarepa and comes to a mountain top where there is a Milarepa on the tip of every blade of grass (instead of finding three identical Milarepas in a cave, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje)*. These gradually merge into each other coming down at first to a hundred thousand, then a thousand, then a hundred, then ten, and finally three, which is similar to the Shamar Khachö Wangpo's ninth and last miracle, with its multiple Milarepas upon the surface of a lake. At this point, the narrative coincides with the 'three Milarepa' narrative in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.[92]

After Milarepa has become single again, instead of suddenly finding themselves back in the cave (as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje)* they walk back to Dramar Chonglung *(Brag-dmar mChong-lung)*. Then the sequence of events follows those of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* more closely, starting with the dialogue in which Milarepa condemns sorcery, though this results in an internal contradiction, for the texts float out from the cave wall and not from Drakar Samling *(Brag-dkar bSam-gling)*.

Rechungpa gains faith in Milarepa and as a result of his practice of meditation is eventually able to fly and manifest illusory bodies. The text repeats *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje s* inaccurate chronology of Rechungpa being Milarepa's attendant for a previous sixteen and for a subsequent sixteen years.[93]

The subsequent episode on meditation as a substitute for refutation by debate is as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

Tsangnyön Heruka's The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa

This text follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative. Its variations, omissions and additions are independent of those we find in *A River of Blessings*. The episode of Rechungpa's stay in India is omitted. Instead, the text remains centred upon Milarepa as

the principal character. The period between Rechungpa's departure and return is filled by a chapter concerning one of Milarepa's female disciples: Salé Ö *(gSal-le'Od)*.[94] The chapter's colophon states that Ngendzong Tönpa *(Ngan-rDzong s Ton-pa)* was its author, even though the chapter does not appear in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* for which Ngendzong Tönpa's writings were a principal source. The colophon is also merged with the preceding prose in such a manner that it appears to be have been rewritten.[95] This chapter describes Milarepa's initial meeting and later encounter with Salé Ö. Within this Ngendzong Tönpa chapter, in-between the initial and later encounter with Salé Ö, Milarepa has his vision of Rechungpa within a crystal stūpa.[96] While *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative could be interpreted as Milarepa gazing into an actual crystal stūpa as a divinatory device (an interpretation that will be made by Tsukla Trengwa *(gTsug-lag Phreng-ba),* here, more plausibly, it is clear that the stūpa itself is a part of Milarepa's vision, in which he sees Rechungpa obscured by a dust storm because of learning sorcery from a non-Buddhist. This vague reference is the only indication as to what occurred in the narrative of Rechungpa's visit to India. This loose end is one sign that Tsangnyön has introduced this passage, derived from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* into the Ngendzong chapter. In leaving out major sections of his source, Tsangnyön's skills in weaving together a consistent, complete narrative were considerably tested and sometimes defeated.

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative, Milarepa's vision is immediately followed by his meeting with Rechungpa. In this Salé Ö chapter, however, after the vision, Milarepa flies from Dramar Potho *(Brag-dmar sPo-mtho)* to Rechen cave *(Ras-chen)* at Lachi mountain *(La-phyi),* creating footprints on the rock as he lands.[97] He then observes Rechungpa clairvoyantly once more, comes to the conclusion that the problem is not serious and sets off to visit Salé Ö instead, which is an awkward compilation of narratives.

The passage concerning Rechungpa has enough in common with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* to demonstrate textual replication from that source, with some colloquial phraseology of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* replaced by more polished classical forms. It appears therefore that Tsangnyön inserted the Rechungpa vision into Ngendzong Tönpa's text, but without making any addition to the colophon, although it was rewritten to merge with the preceding prose. If this had been the text in its original form it would have been the earliest account of Rechungpa available to us, written by one of his contemporaries, but that is not the case.

In the next chapter, chapter thirty-eight, Milarepa has left Salé Ö, but the preceding fragment of narrative concerning Rechungpa is repeated so as to serve as an introduction for the meeting with Rechungpa. Milarepa is staying at Betse Döyön Dzong *(Be-rtse 'Dod-yon rDzong),* where he sees that Rechungpa has arrived in Gungthang and 'has a little pride'. He goes to meet Rechungpa on the Palmo Palthang plain. There is little textual replication in the following episode, which is almost entirely rewritten. Rechungpa has the arrogance to think that though Milarepa is superior in compassion and blessing, he is Milarepa's superior in instruction and logic. This is the reason why he expects Milarepa to prostrate to him and is displeased when Milarepa does not. In the earlier version it was a desire for the *ḍāka-niṣkāya* teachings to be respected. Tsangnyön does not repeat this sentence. The result is that the wish for Milarepa to

prostrate himself appears to be solely caused by egoism. In other words, Tsangnyön creates a less favourable depiction of Rechungpa.

Milarepa sings the song of his happiness—in reply to Rechungpa's question concerning his welfare—from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and not the version in Gyadangpa. Rechungpa's song in reply is a composite compiled from Rechungpa's first two songs to Milarepa in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* while the Milarepa song that had its place between those two songs is omitted in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. We see here Tsangnyön's version removing, by merger, the repetitiveness that resulted from the compilation of parallel narratives in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. However, in the compiled song, Rechungpa specifically asks, with two new lines added, for Milarepa's homage for the teachings he has obtained, in order to ensure their future success. This indicates that, whether Tsangnyön or an earlier author combined the two songs, it contradicts the preceding prose narrative.

The Hundred Thousand Songs then follows the sequence of songs in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje;* even having the conclusion of a sub-chapter where the older text concluded a chapter.[98]

Tsangnyön retells the yak horn episode in his own words. The passage becomes more amusing and memorable, with Rechungpa thinking more 'evil thoughts' than in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. He broods on his own importance, his right to enjoy himself, and how Milarepa is 'sometimes full of anger like an old dog, [sometimes] full of desire like an old man'.[99]

The narrative progresses into the hailstorm as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. The song that Milarepa sings inside the yak horn is a variant of that in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* while the only similiarity in Rechungpa's song is a single occurrence of the refrain—'Whether my cotton robe is dry or wet, I pray to you' *(ras gos sham rung rlon rung gsol ba 'debs)*.[100] The narrative, from the point of Milarepa's emergence from the horn and through to the death of the old lady and the subsequent songs, follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* more closely, for though no sentence is left unaltered, most of the text's words are retained.[101]

The location for the burning of the texts is, as one would expect, Dramar *(Brag-dmar),* in agreement with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and in disagreement with Gyadangpa, but the site is specified to be the Nyima Dzong cave (*Nyi-ma rDzong:* 'Sun Castle') at Dramar Potho *(Brag-dmar sPo-mtho),* and not Dramar Chonglung *(Brag-dmar mChong-lung)* as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Unlike the preceding versions, no reason is given as to why Rechungpa has to go some distance for water, omitting any reference to the local water being harmful for Milarepa, which conforms with Tsangnyön's portrait of Milarepa as invulnerable.

Rechungpa is said to arrive at a wide plain in-between Potho *(sPo-mtho)* and Kyipuk cave *(sKyid-phug)*. The sight he sees there is more miraculous than in previous versions. He sees a kyang give birth. Both mother and child then each give birth, and so on until there are 100 mothers and 100 offspring. The mathematics is flawed; the result should be 128 of each. *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* had only a total of seven kyang, but the number of 100 coincides with both *A River of Blessings,* the *Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage* and *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* versions, indicating independent developments from an original kyang narrative. These kyang play together, without any

of the wolves of the other versions. Instead, one of the kyang eventually transforms into a wolf and chases the others away over a mountain pass.

Milarepa's burning of the texts is described briefly and vaguely, though Milarepa does rely on the ḍākinīs to separate the beneficial texts from the harmful. He then burns all but a few scrolls, which are *not* said to float away into the cave wall.

When Rechungpa returns to find nothing but the text-covers left, some humour is injected into the narrative: Milarepa laconically tells Rechungpa that he had been gone so long, he thought he had died, and as he had no use for the texts himself he burned them. 'What took you so long?' he asks Rechungpa, who now loses all faith in Milarepa.

The series of miracles and songs in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Mialrepa* are a developed form of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version and not of *A River of Blessings*. Both miracles and songs are greatly elaborated.

1 Marpa in the form of Vajradhara, surrounded by the gurus of the lineage, appears above Milarepa's head. The sun and moon appear at Milarepa's ears, rainbow lights come from his nostrils, the Sanskrit alphabet appears on a lotus, sun and moon seat upon his tongue, and a shining knot of eternity appears at his heart.[102]

2 In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* a crystal stupa appeared on his tongue as the second miracle. That miracle is omitted in *The Hundred Thousand Songs*. Instead, the second miracle is a version of the third miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* in which Hevajra deities appear in his heart. In this version his body becomes transparent (so that he does not have to cut himself open) to reveal even more deities: Catuḥpīṭha, Hevajra, Mahāmāya and Buddhakapāla at the *cakras* of, respectively, the groin, navel, heart, throat, mid-eyebrow and crown. A new song accompanies this miracle.[103]

4 The fourth and the fifth miracles correspond to the fourth miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* where he splits and moulds a boulder as if it were clay, and are also equivalents of the seventh miracle in *A River of Blessings* where Milarepa goes down to the shore of a lake, rides around on a boulder, squeezes it and shatters it. In *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* he first passes through solid objects, rides a boulder, walks on water, blazes with fire, spouts water and emanates and reabsorbs copies of himself. A new song that describes these miracles accompanies them.[104]

5 As a fifth miracle, Milarepa goes to a boulder that blocks a traders' route and slices it like dough, squeezes it like clay and finally, with one hand, throws it into a river. A new song accompanies this miracle.[105]

6 In the equivalent of the fifth miracle in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Milarepa uses his robe as wings and flies into the sky where he 'hovers like a vulture, swoops like a hawk, darts like lightning.'[106] This miracle is accompanied by a new song, whereas *A River of Blessings* had a variant of the one in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Unlike *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* he does not disappear and reappear before singing a second song, but just flies up 'once again' into the sky and sings. Only then does Milarepa disappear into the sky, reappear, sing and disappear again. The song is new, but there is still a reference to the kyang and wolf.[107]

Rechungpa's response to Milarepa's departure is more drastic than in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* where he rejected the idea of suicide as wrong and instead risked his life by climbing. Believing that Milarepa has left this world to a pure realm that he will not be

able to reach, Rechungpa decides to kill himself. With a prayer that he may meet Milarepa in all his lives, he sincerely attempts to throw himself off the cliff, but finds himself remaining, wobbling on the edge of the cliff.[108] Then Milarepa's shadow passes over him. Rechungpa attempts to fly, but fails, and so he follows Milarepa's shadow, which takes him up the side of the mountain until he comes across three Milarepas who sing to him, thus coinciding again with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative. *The Hundred Thousand Songs* at this point has an extended dialogue in song between Milarepa and Rechungpa, in which Milarepa admonishes him for having brought back works on logic and sorcery. In one song Milarepa mentions that the saved teachings have flown into a crack in the cave-wall, although it is a detail that had been omitted in the narrative up to this point. There is no narrative transition to bring Milarepa and Rechungpa back to the cave where the texts had been burned, but yet, the texts return to Rechungpa when he prays for them.[109]

From this point on, *The Hundred Thousand Songs* and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* return to the earlier narrative stratum found in the Gyadangpa family of texts. Rechungpa makes a commitment to remain as Milarepa's attendant, but does not, as in other texts, specify the number of years that he will do so. Without beginning a new chapter, the narrative moves immediately on to the episode of refutation through meditation practice. Milarepa's pupils gather to welcome Rechungpa and he sings in response to Seben Repa's request that he debate using logic.

However, we witness here Tsangnyön writing another literary demotion of Rechungpa's status. Milarepa, instead of giving Rechungpa unequivocal praise, as he did in earlier versions, adds that there is something that Rechungpa still lacks and sings a song on the subject, giving the impression that Rechungpa's understanding is incomplete.

Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa ('Jams-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, *1478–1523*)

This account is too brief to demonstrate provenance. There is no mention of Rechungpa acquiring a *beubum* or of Milarepa burning it. There is solely Milarepa's manifestation of 'signs of accomplishment' in order to break Rechungpa's pride (the motif that first appears in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje)*. After this, Rechungpa offers his profound instructions to Milarepa. It may be that this text's emphasis upon Rechungpa as the lineage-bearer caused Jamyang Drakpa to diminish those passages that did not reflect favourably upon him.[110]

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal (1473–1557)

For this passage, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal appears to have used both Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* and *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* as a source. To what extent he relied upon *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* (written by Rechungpa's own pupils) we cannot tell until a copy comes to light.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal summarises his sources to the extent that he does not mention Rechungpa obtaining a *beubum* in Nepal. He does say that Rechungpa has developed pride (as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*) but describes it as 'a little

pride', as does Shamarpa and *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. Unlike Tsangnyön, however, as an expression of respect for Rechungpa, Lhatsun uses the honorific form of 'pride' *(thugs-rgyal)* instead of the common form *(nga-rgyal)*.[111]

Only the first two lines of Milarepa's song concerning his welfare are supplied, as this is a collection focussed upon Rechungpa's songs. As is evident, for example, in the first line of this song, even though his own teacher authored *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* it is *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version that Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal mostly relies upon.[112]

Rechungpa's request in prose and song for Milarepa to honour the teachings he has brought back is taken from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and not the version in *The Hundred Thousand Songs,*[113] as are the first two lines of Milarepa's next song in which he lists the practices which make him happy, which was entirely omitted in *The Hundred Thousand Songs.*[114] Rinchen Namgyal gives in full Rechungpa's next song, which *The Hundred Thousand Songs* combined into one with Rechungpa's preceding song.[115]

The first two lines of Milarepa's song 'to break Rechungpa's pride' follow,[116] and then 'the Running-song' *(mdur-dbyangs)*[117] is in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version.[118]

Rinchen Namgyal's narrative omits any reference to Milarepa's song of advice,[119] and merely mentions that Milarepa sang a song inside the yak horn,[120] and so quickly reaches what is here called Rechungpa's 'shivering song' (*'dar ma dbyangs),*[121] delivered as he looked into the horn, trembling with the cold. This song is again *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* version and not Tsangnyön's variant.[122]

Rinchen Namgyal omits the episode of the old woman in the encampment who dies, probably because this is devoid of songs, and jumps forward to Milarepa's suggestion that they go to meditate at Kailash, while Rechungpa wishes to go to a nearby hermitage to rest. This prompts Milarepa's song of 'the eight sufficiencies', which is only referred to here, Rinchen Namgyal reproducing only Rechungpa's counter-song, which pleads that though one's body alone is sufficient as a hermitage, one still needs an external hermitage, and so on.[123]

They proceed to Kyipuk cave *(sKyid-phug,* which means 'happiness cave') at Dramar Khyungding *(Brag-dmar Khyung-lding),* which means 'Floating Garuda at Red Rock'. In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* they went to an unspecified cave at Chonglung *(mChong-lung),* previously referred to in that text as Dramar Chongling *(Brag-dmar mChong-gling);* in *The Hundred Thousand Songs* they go to Nyima Dzong *(Nyi-ma rDzong)* cave at Dramar Potho *(Brag-dmar sPo-mtho),* while Gyadangpa set this scene at Tröpuk *(Brod-phug)* cave in Nyanam *(sNya-nam)*.

In an abbreviated narrative, Rechungpa is sent for water (with no reason given) and watches 100 kyang and their young playing, without wolves, as in *The Golden Garland of Ralung* version, while also corresponding with *The Hundred Thousand Songs*. Milarepa prays that the beneficial texts may go into the hands of the *ḍākinīs* and those pages fly into the rock wall (as in The Life and Songs of *Shepay Dorje* and Gyadangpa, a detail that is omitted by *The Hundred Thousand Songs)*. Milarepa burns the remainder and, following *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* narrative closely, Rechungpa hurries back, becomes worried on smelling burned paper and finds his worst fears confirmed.

The entire miracle sequence is summarized in one sentence, eliminating all of Milarepa's songs:

> He lost all faith. Whatever miracles the venerable one demonstrated, he did not believe in him; [Milarepa] flew into the sky and rose up high until only his voice could be heard and his body could not be seen.[124]

Unlike *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and similar to *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* Rechungpa *does* attempt suicide on believing that Milarepa has departed from this life. This text simply states:

> He jumped off a cliff, regained consciousness, and the master and pupil arrived at the place where the paper was burned. [Rechungpa] developed unwavering faith in his guru and made a commitment to be his inseparable attendant for twelve years.[125]

Thus, the meeting with the multiple Milarepas is omitted, and the number of years that he promises to be Milarepa's attendant differs from the sixteen years of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* and *A River of Blessings,* and is a possible passage of time. The other texts we have looked at did not specify the number of years. Unlike, Lhatsun, we have seen Gyadangpa and other texts have Rechungpa make a twelve-year commitment after the return from his first visit to India to obtain a cure from Varacandra. Lhatsun had given that passage in a very concise form, but without that detail, so it may have been transposed here.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal appears to pass directly to the 'debate' passage, for Milarepa asks Rechungpa how he would refute others in debate. But not only is the setting of Seben Repa and the other pupils missing, the song that Rechungpa sings is another, with no direct relation to debate.[126]

There is a slightly later episode in Lhatsun,[127] however, which preserves a variant of the miracle episode in *The Hundred Thousand Songs*. While staying at Lachi Mountain *(La-phyi),* Rechungpa has a dream of Tipupa and wants to return to India. Milarepa says, 'Tibet is more marvellous than India,' and manifests a series of miracles and short songs, each ending with the refrain 'Son, there is nothing marvellous about India!'

1 Marpa appears on Milarepa's head.
2 Sunlight and moonlight come from his ears.
3 Lights of five colours appear at the tip of his nose.
4 An *urṇa* hair shines with great light between his eyebrows.
5 The Sanskrit alphabet appears upon his tongue.
6 A knot of eternity appears upon his upper body.
7 Deities appear at the sites of the cakras: Cakrasaṃvara at the navel, Hevajra at the heart, Māhamāya at the throat, Guhyasamāja at the crown, Buddhakapāla between the eyebrows and Catuḥpīṭha at the genital area (cf. the second miracle in *The Hundred Thousand Songs).*
8 He passes through the walls of the cave.

9 A kyang gives birth to a kyang that immediately gives birth, creating three, which distracts Rechungpa.
10 Milarepa rides a boulder like a horse.
11 Milarepa levitates into the air.
12 There appear three Milarepas.

Of particular interest here is the ninth miracle in which Rechungpa is distracted by three kyang. As the text burning episode is over, what exactly he is being distracted from is not specified. They are explained, however, to be symbols of the three *kāyas*. Also, the final miracle of the triplicate Milarepa appears in one form or another at the conclusion of the conflict episode in the other narratives.

This passage has features of a later stratum for the miracles did not appear at all in Gyadangpa and it appears to be the summary of an alternate version that does not appear elsewhere, but Lhatsun or an earlier author had transposed to a later stage in the narrative.

Götsang Repa

The description of Rechungpa receiving sorcery instruction from a *tīrthika* follows *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* almost word for word. Götsang Repa therefore does not include *The Hundred Thousand Songs'* chapter on Salé Ö. As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* it places Milarepa's vision of Rechungpa within a crystal stūpa at Dramar Chonglung *(Brag-dmar mChong-lung),* which was Dramar Chongling *(Brag-dmar mChong gi Gling)* in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.

However, there follows a narrative link derived from the Salé Ö chapter, even though there is no direct textual replication. Milarepa flies to Rechen cave *(Ras-chen Phug)* at Lachi Mountain *(La-phyi),* where he creates a clear set of footprints in the rock when he lands. At this point Götsang Repa segues into *The Hundred Thousand Songs* narrative, at the point where chapter thirty-eight commences in that text and Milarepa is said to be staying at Betse Döyön Dzong *(Be-rtse 'Dod-yon rDzong).*[128]

From this point on, Götsang Repa is predominantly based upon *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* often reproducing passages verbatim, but he also occasionally replicates phrases or passages from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* conjoining them with material from *The Hundred Thousand Songs* and with material that has not appeared in any other text.

The episode of the burning of Rechungpa's texts begins with Milarepa and Rechungpa going to stay at the Kyipuk *(sKyid-phug)* cave, which is named Nyima Dzong *(Nyi-ma rDzong)* and is located at Dramar Potho *(Brag-dmar sPo-mtho),* as in *The Hundred Thousand Songs.*[129] Milarepa sends Rechungpa for water from Dramar Chonglung *(Brag-dmar mChong-lung),* because the nearby water is harmful to Milarepa's eyes, which statement is reproduced from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* even though in that text they were *staying* at Dramar Chonglung.[130] Rechungpa has to travel across a wide plain *between* Potho *(sPo-mtho)* and Kyipuk *(sKyid-phug),* even though Götsang Repa appears to have located Kyipuk *at* Potho. Perhaps Götsang Repa's meaning was that Kyipuk was *near* to Potho, but it demonstrates a lack of clarity that is characteristic of some of Götsang Repa's contributions to the narrative, which certainly do not improve upon Tsangnyön's story-telling.

At this point, Götsang Repa inserts an interesting judgement on the narrative tradition of 'old writings' *(yig-cha rnying),* which appear to be based upon a narrative tradition related to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje.* Götsang Repa claims that these writings are unreliable, but his further comments are unclear for he appears to assume that the reader is familiar with these now unkown sources, such as their mention of a place named Trinzam *(sPrin-zam),* which means 'Cloud Bridge', at Drakya Dorje Dzong *(Brag-skya rDo-rje rDzong).* It is to be hoped that these biographies will eventually be discovered, or at least identified. This is a fascinating rare passage in which an author makes a record, however tantalisingly incomplete, of his comparative evaluation of his sources. Götsang Repa writes:

> In various old writings the location is said to be Drakya Dorje Dzong. However, apart from rainwater during the period between the fifth or sixth to the eighth month, there are no springs whatsoever there. The water across from there is at the exceedingly steep Turshong Drarong *(Thur-gshong Brag-rong)* gorge through which only one person can pass at a time; between those [two places] there is no plain whatsoever.
>
> Also, it is a four-day journey from Betse *(Be-rtse)* to Kuthang *(Ku-thang)* and back again, etc., [revealing] a lack of familiarity with the region [in these sources]. Although nothing is certain concerning emanations, [these writings] contain many incongruities.
>
> In the present there are known to be [locations named] Trinzam *(sPrin-zam)* at Namkha Dzong *(gNam[-mkha rDzong]),* at Poto Kyipuk *(sPo-mtho sKyid-phug),* and other places, but not at Drakya Dorje Dzong *(Brag-skya rDo-rje rDzong),* which is [therefore] a direct contradiction [with the facts].
>
> A hundred kyang females with a hundred thousand young travelling and chasing [each other] upon the waves of the water is in direct contradiction with the contents of the venerable [Milarepa]'s songs[131]

Continuing with the narrative, as in Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, a second set of miracles occurs when Milarepa wishes to dissuade Rechungpa from returning to India. However, Götsang Repa does not seem to have been enthusiastic about including it, in spite of his tendency to be as comprehensive as possible. Therefore, he only gives us the first song and miracle, and then merely states that 'there were many more'.[132]

Thus, unlike Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, Götsang Repa used *The Hundred Thousand Songs* as his primary source instead of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* only relying on the latter text for the section on Rechungpa's visit to India, which was not covered by *The Hundred Thousand Songs*.

Pawo Tsukla Trengwa (dPa'-bo gTsug-lag 'Phreng-ba) *(1504–66)*

In his *The Feast of Scholars,* written between 1545 and 1565, this Karma Kagyu master appears to present a brief summary of Götsang Repa.[133] This could just as well be a

summary of *The Hundred Thousand Songs* except that Rechungpa vows to stay with Milarepa for a further twelve years, a detail that is found in Götsang Repa only.

However, he misinterprets the crystal stūpa in Milarepa's vision of Rechungpa as a physical object, for he says that Milarepa was constantly observing Rechungpa within it. He also uses this passage to make an unpleasant warning to readers against non-buddhists. He states that one should never have a connection with one, even for beneficial teachings, let alone for harmful ones such as sorcery.

Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527–92)

In his history of Buddhism, completed in 1575, Pema Karpo relates this episode extremely briefly in his account of Rechungpa's life,[134] but relates it at slightly greater length in his account of Milarepa's life.

In the latter account, he mentions Milarepa practising *yantra-yoga* inside the yak horn (as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*). He also has 100 wolves chasing the 100 kyang, the number that we also find in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* presumably Pema Karpo's source, but this is also in *The Kagyu Golden Garland of Ralung* and *A River of Blessings*.

The series of miracles, which are related in brief, are as in *The Hundred Thousand Songs*.

However, Pema Karpo uses this incident to evaluate what stage of spiritual accomplishment Milarepa had attained at this point in his life-story. He takes this manifestation of miracles to Rechungpa as a sign that he had at this time 'unravelled the *nāḍī* knot in his forehead' *(dpral ba 'i rtsa mdud grol has)* and had thus become a bodhisattva on the tenth *bhūmi,* the highest bodhisattva level in the *sūtra* tradition, where 'the post-meditation state is identical to that of a Buddha' *(rjes thob de bzhin gshegs pa rnams dang khyed par med)*.[135] Pema Karpo states also that at the time of Milarepa's death, he had reached the twelfth *bhūmi,* which is the highest bodhisattva level in the *tantra* tradition, though he still has further to go to attain buddhahood, which he would achieve, after death, in Akśobhya's realm of Abhirati.[136]

Śākya-Rinchen (mid-eighteenth century)

This passage[137] is primarily a summary of Gadé Gyaltsen, that is, Götsang Repa, replicating chosen phrases from that text and omitting all the songs. One minor addition is an unusual colloquial description of Milarepa as seen through Rechungpa's eyes after he has been disappointed by his welcome. Milarepa is described as wearing an untidy belt made of grass around his worn out clothes. Where his hair is long, he has pounded it with stones, presumably to stop it from becoming matted, but the shorter parts have been ignored. His blackened bare-feet are covered in bleeding cuts and sores. Rechungpa thinks:

> People say my guru is a lunatic; well, he certainly looks one. Might he be nothing but just someone incapable of working and who's a siddha only in name?[138]

We also find that Śākya Rinchen repeats a detail that we have not seen since *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*.[139] When Rechungpa is running after Milarepa, anxious to keep up with him, it is because he is worried that Milarepa does not value the texts and might give them away to just anybody.

It is also said, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* that Milarepa practised the physical movements *of yantra yoga ('phrul-'khor)* when he was inside the yak horn.[140] This detail appears elsewhere only in Pema Karpo's account, which Śākya Rinchen, as a later member of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage would surely have read.

The series of miracles is the same as that given in Götsang Repa but they are only listed and the songs are omitted. When Rechungpa throws himself off the cliff, there is the addition of his being 'caught by the venerable one's miraculous powers and settled on a rock' *(rje btsun gyi rdzu 'phrul gyis bzung nas brag steng zhing la chags)*[141] In Tsangnyön's *The Hundred Thousand Songs* and in the almost identical passage in Götsang Repa (where a phonologically identical synonym is the only difference) the cause of his survival was not explicit: 'though he threw himself into the precipice, his body remained wavering on the side of the cliff' (Tsangnyön: *brag g.yang la mchongs pas lus yang phyod pa dang bcas brag logs su lus;* Götsang Repa: *brag g.yang la mchongs pas/lus yang chod pa dang bcas brag logs su lus)*.[142] In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* Rechungpa never had the intention to commit suicide, while in Gyadangpa this entire episode of the miracles did not occur. In Śākya Rinchen, even at this later period, when Tsangnyön's version has become well established, we find that there can still be an accretion of small details that can enhance the legend.

In Śākya Rinchen, the passage ends with Milarepa's praise of Rechungpa, so that the reader is left in no doubt that, in spite of the preceding conflict, Rechungpa has succeeded upon the spiritual path. This is an important point for the Drukpa Kagyu to emphasise, since Rechungpa's transmission is a central part of its corpus of teachings.

The History of Drakar Taso (1828)

This text has just a brief description of the return, which accords with *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* referring to its chapter titles in passing, but as it includes the detail of Milarepa's forehead knot being loosened, it appears to be based on Pema Karpo. Here we see that the yak horn episode is now a long-established 'fact' of the life of Rechungpa.

> When [Rechungpa] returned [to Tibet] he had developed pride and [Milarepa] came to greet him. There is *The Yak horn* chapter and also [Milarepa] manifested inconceivable miracles that were endless displays of his body speech and mind, eliminiating [Rechungpa's] pride without any remainder. At that time, [Milarepa] manifested the appearance of loosening the forehead knot and reaching the tenth bhūmi.[143]

The text adds the words 'manifested the appearance of' because it follows the tradition—contrary to that of Tsangnyön—that Milarepa was an emanation of Mañjuśrūīmitra, and so on, in other words born in a state of full buddhahood and only had the appearance of going through the process of attaining enlightenment in order to inspire others.

Conclusion

We have seen that this crucial episode in Rechungpa's life was subject to continuing transformation and evolution. We can be certain that Rechungpa did bring back teachings of Tipupa to Tibet, but whether there is any historical basis to Milarepa burning any of his texts will not be certain until the discovery of a copy of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*. That incident, even if a later addition to the Rechungpa legend, proved a fruitful seed for later narrators, developing into a display of miracles by Milarepa which were to serve as proof for Pema Karpo of Milarepa's enlightenment. For the Rechungpa figure in the narrative tradition, however, this entailed a corresponding increase in the transgressiveness of his character, so that he became guilty of a loss of faith and of hostility to his guru. Though the lapse was brief, such a deviation is normally considered the gravest fault in a *vajrayāna* practitioner.

This created an image of Rechungpa that is characterised by imperfection, particularly among those who were unaware of the subsequent events of his life. That image was further enhanced by his 'demotion' in status to Gampopa, which is particularly evident in Tsangnyön Heruka's *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* and which is a topic that will be explored next.

9
MARRIAGE, PUPILS AND THE END OF LIFE

The rest of Rechungpa's life after his final visit to India is not as complex a subject as those covered in the preceding chapters, for such accounts are fewer and tend to agree, for Milarepa was the principal focus of narrative development.

These sources are principally Gyadangpa, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa, though details of the latter years of Rechungpa also appear in biographies of his contemporaries and pupils.

Rechungpa's last years with Milarepa

Introduction

In *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* which provides the popular image of Rechungpa, he is unequivocally portrayed as secondary to Gampopa, the Kadampa monk who merged Milarepa's teaching with the Kadampa tradition to form the Dakpo Kagyu school. According to *The Hundred Thousand Songs,* just before Milarepa meets Rechungpa, a *ḍākinī* prophesied to him that Gampopa would be 'the sun pupil' while Rechungpa would be the 'moon pupil'.[1] *The Hundred Thousand Songs* makes no reference to a future lineage from Rechungpa, so that a reader unfamiliar with the history of the Rechung Kagyu or Nyengyu *(sNyan-rgyud)* lineages could gain the impression that Rechungpa proved unsuccessful as a teacher. In fact, Tsangnyön was a holder of Rechungpa's lineage, and his immediate circle would have been aware of this. Nevertheless, Tsangnyön emphasises Rechungpa's deficiencies and the superiority of Gampopa and even gives the impression that it was Gampopa alone who received the entire transmission of Milarepa's instruction.

Long before Tsangnyön's time, the Dakpo Kagyu had taken on a powerful role in Tibetan religion, so that Gampopa had become, retrospectively, a far more significant figure. From the perspective of members of the Dakpo Kagyu traditions, Tsangnyön's depiction of Gampopa's relationship with Milarepa confirms the primacy of their lineages. They would certainly not have found it pleasing to see their founder represented as secondary to Rechungpa, as this would have given their lineages a secondary status. It is of crucial importance for practitioners to believe that they are fortunate to be within the central transmission of the Buddha's teaching.

Rechungpa's inferiority is at its most explicit, unsurprisingly, within biographies of Gampopa. For example, in *The Liberation of Unequalled Gampopa* by Sonam Lhundrup, we have Milarepa saying:

> This Rechungpa has attained an irreversible result for himself, but he will not bring great benefit to beings. But now, a scholar from Ü, who will benefit many beings, has come.[2]

Similarly, Nyengyu lineage histories state unequivocally that Rechungpa is Milarepa's principal pupil and successor, a status that has been eclipsed in popular perception as a result of that lineage's marginalisation and absorption into the Karma, Talung and Drukpa Kagyu. However, these incorporated Rechungpa lineage histories retain anomalous declarations of Rechungpa's supremacy.

Gyadangpa

In Gyadangpa's early biography of Rechungpa, the personal relationship between Rechungpa and Milarepa is not beset with difficulties, though it is lively. For example, Rechungpa's persistence in badgering Milarepa for songs of instruction provokes from Milarepa the good-natured complaint, 'This Rechungpa won't let an old man sit down!' *(ras chung pa 'dis mi rgan sdod du mi ster ba 'dug gsungs)* before he complies.[3]

Milarepa interprets Rechungpa's dreams that appear to be very bad omens as signs of spiritual success, and he is listed as first amongst his four principal *repa* pupils, with these four being amongst the twenty-five prophesied to Milarepa in a vision by a *ḍākinī*. Gampopa does not appear among those twenty-five, even though Gyadangpa's text is a lineage history of the Drukpa Kagyu and Rechungpa's biography is preceded in that text by a laudatory biography of Gampopa. This indicates that the Rechungpa biography had its origins within the Nyengyu tradition. Khyungtsangpa, Rechungpa's pupil and source of a Nyengyu lineage, is twice referred to as a source.

Rechungpa is declared by Milarepa to be characterised by 'great wisdom' *(shes rab can)*[4] and transmits to him the lineage of 'buddhahood without meditation' *(ma sgoms par sang rgya ba),* which he had been told he could pass on to one pupil only.[5] This term refers, in this context, to the practice of sexual yoga, which is said to be 'without meditation' because of its emphasis on physical movement, posture, breathing and the normal morphology of sexual excitement. The implication is that Milarepa transmitted this to no one else, including Gampopa, who was anyway a monk.

Rechungpa leaves Milarepa for central Tibet on Milarepa's insistence. Rechungpa wishes to spend Milarepa's last years with him, but he tells Rechungpa that he is not a disciple who is a son that has to take care of his father's corpse.[6]

Rechungpa's departure provides the context for a song unusual in the context of a hagiography, and which at first appears to run counter to its surrounding narrative. After Rechungpa leaves, Milarepa sings a plaintive song that, even though it emphasises Rechungpa's spiritual attainments, sings about 'the shameless Rechungpa' who has abandoned him. Milarepa laments that from now on, even if the valley were to be filled with people, he will feel alone. The subsequent prose narrative draws these contraries

together when Milarepa calms the distress of those who have listened to the song by explaining that it was just a joke, and admits that he sent him away!

There is only one return visit that is described. Rechungpa comes back to see Milarepa, bringing with him an offering of meat. It is their very last meeting. Gyadangpa does not have Rechungpa attend Milarepa's cremation in either the Milarepa or Rechungpa biographies.

Variant pupil lists

The even earlier Donmo Ripa, our earliest surviving source on Rechungpa, lists him as the first of the four 'heart sons' of Milarepa, adding Gampopa as the first of six 'pupils from the end of his life'.[7]

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje, unsurprisingly, has the same kind of list,[8] even though several of its chapters are dedicated to Gampopa. A version of this form of listing Milarepa's pupils, with Rechungpa as the first of eight principal pupils, is also found in *The Red Annals*[9] and *The Chronicle of China and Tibet*.[10]

Even later texts in which Rechungpa does not feature prominently, such as Talungpa Ngawang Namgyal's *A Wonderful Ocean of Dharma History,* he is listed as the first of Milarepa's eight principal pupils, with Gampopa in the list of six pupils from the end of Milarepa's life.[11]

The Lhorong Dharma History[12] has a more complex list, but Milarepa's four heart sons are the first four of eight '*repa* brothers'. As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* these are Rechungpa, Ngendzong (written as *Ngam-rdzong*), Drigom *('Bri-sgom)* and Seben Repa *(Se-ban Ras-pa)*. However, Gampopa, instead of being one of 'the six scholars of [Milarepa's] old age' *(sku bgres khar 'khrungs*[13] *pa'i ston pa drug),* is extracted from that lowly position and introduced further on in the text as 'supreme amongst [Milarepa's pupils]'.[14]

Biographies of the Kagyu Lineage, Commencing with Vajradhara also expresses this dichotomy in a simplified list that begins: 'Amongst the many heart-sons of the venerable one, the chief were Lord Rechungpa, the emanated bodhisattva Gampopa' *(thugs kyi sras mang po'i nang nas mthu bor gyur pa rje ras chung pa/sprul pa'i byang chub sems dpa' sgam po pa)*. Yet, sixteen names further on, the list concludes by saying, 'Amongst these [pupils], who had realised the *dharmatā,* the venerable Gampopa was supreme' *(chos nyid kyi don rtogs pa rnams kyi nang nas rje btsun sgam po pa de mchog tu gyur pa lags so).*[15]

Shamar Khachö Wangpo avoids the problem by merely giving a list of groups of disciples without giving individual names—'the eight *repa* brothers, the nine great sons, the ten yoginī sisters, etc.',—and then adds that Gampopa was supreme amongst his human pupils.[16]

We shall see further on that Tsangnyön manages to iron out this internal contradiction.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje (and its almost verbatim repetition in *A River of Blessings*), as we have seen earlier, portrays a more troubled relationship between

Rechungpa and Milarepa than Gyadangpa does. It describes two departures from Milarepa. In the first of these, the patrons are said to have a higher opinion of Rechungpa, because he has been to India, so that he gets excellent offerings while Milarepa is given only rotten meat, sour beer and the like. This is a somewhat unconvincing episode in the context of the description of the relationship between the patrons and Milarepa in the rest of the narrative. Nevertheless, in this passage, Rechungpa is shocked by the patrons' behaviour and decides to leave. In a dialogue of song and counter-song, Milarepa vainly attempts to persuade an unmoved Rechungpa to stay. Rechungpa says that even if leaving makes his guru and fellow pupils unhappy, he will have no regrets. Milarepa reluctantly agrees on condition that Rechungpa performs a set of hundreds of offerings and homages.[17]

The next day Rechungpa leaves, forgetting to perform the practices. Milarepa decides to test Rechungpa and emanates as a dying ant on Rechungpa's pathway. Rechungpa cuts off his own flesh to feed it. Then Milarepa emanates as seven bandits who come to kill Rechungpa. Rechungpa's response is to meditate on his guru.

Then Milarepa emanates as seven yogins who ask Rechungpa polite, mundane questions. Rechungpa answers them with inspired songs of realisation. The yogins transform into Milarepa who sings Rechungpa a song in which he wishes him good fortune, but also warns him of a 'russet bitch' that will seize him by the leg (a prophecy that will be explained below). He also gives Rechungpa permission to receive *Mahāmudrā* teachings from the Nepalese master Asu.[18]

When female lay disciples come to see Milarepa and Rechungpa and discover that Rechungpa has left, they hide the nice offerings they had brought for Rechungpa and go see Milarepa. Milarepa sings them four songs about Rechungpa, one of which is a brief version of the Gyadangpa song of lamentation described earlier. The other three songs are filled with poetic imagery: Rechungpa is more beautiful than a peacock, whiter than a snow mountain, is a tiger who has left his father-forest, etc.; without portraying Milarepa as vulnerable to sorrow.[19] Milarepa concludes a song with a clairvoyant reference to the female disciples hiding their offerings like foxes. They immediately bring the offerings, out of hiding and give them to Milarepa.

After the Lhachik Dembu episode,[20] which is described below, Rechungpa returns to see Milarepa for a second time, in an episode that forms the 'Meeting in the Shrine Room' *(mChod-khang Zhal-mjal)* chapter.[21]

There follow chapters on Gampopa that conclude with Gampopa's departure from Milarepa.[22]

Further on in the text is the chapter on Rechungpa's final departure at the conclusion of his second visit, which covered the time of Gampopa's visit.[23] As in Gyadangpa, Milarepa, although his death is near, persuades Rechungpa to leave. However, unlike Gyadangpa, he complains about Rechungpa's disobedient nature saying that when he tries to get Rechungpa to stay, he would not stay, but when he wants him to leave, he would not go!

Rechungpa finally agrees to leave, and in a long sequence of leave-taking, Milarepa prophesies Rechungpa's future area of activity and transmits the entire Nyengyu transmission to him. Milarepa then says that there is still one remaining instruction that until now he had decided against imparting, but now he will. He lifts his robe to show Rechungpa his bottom, which is entirely callused as the result of prolonged sitting in

meditation and resembles ‘a monkey’s bottom’ *(spre’u yi/*[24] *‘phongs)*.[25] Milarepa says, ‘There is nothing more profound than this’ *(‘di las*[26] *zab pa med)*.[27] Rechungpa leaves, never to see Milarepa again.

As mentioned earlier, Gampopa is depicted as being with Milarepa during the period in-between Rechungpa’s return to Milarepa, after his liaison with Lhachik Dembu *(lHa-cig lDem-bu),* and before Rechungpa’s final departure. Like early versions of Gampopa’s life, such as that by Lama Shang *(Bla-ma Zhang),* the narrative of Gampopa is not elaborated by miraculous and dramatic elements. However, there is a certain lack of resolution in the contrast between the status of Rechungpa and that of Gampopa. The text as a whole implies that Gampopa has *not* received the entire transmission from Milarepa, but Rechungpa has. Nevertheless, when Rechungpa says to Milarepa that he assumes that, as he was the first of his pupils, he will be the one who protects the instructions and the community of the lineage,[28] Milarepa does not take the opportunity to declare him to be his principal successor. Two weeks later, Gampopa turns up. The text could be understood to be implying that Gampopa is the one who will maintain the lineage. Milarepa, accompanied by Rechungpa and Seben Repa, sing to this scholar *(ston-pa)* and Milarepa subsequently gives him instructions and interprets his dreams.

In particular, on one occasion, Milarepa asks Rechungpa, Seben Repa and Gampopa to describe one night’s dreams. (This passage is not present in the Stockholm edition.) Seben Repa’s dream of a blazing fire where three valleys meet means that he will not achieve much in this life, but will manifest as a *rūpakāya* in the next. Seben Repa just does not seem to be able to do anything right in these earlier biographies. Rechungpa’s dream of blowing a conch while driving a salt-laden donkey before him means that his fame will pervade the world. Gampopa’s dream of being on top of a white rock at sunrise while vultures circle him means that he will help many pupils at a great rocky mountain.[29] Therefore, Milarepa instructs Gampopa to go to Ü to accomplish this activity. This version contrasts strikingly with the later Tsangnyön version, as we shall see later.

Milarepa escorts Gampopa a little of the way and after some general advice instructs him to return on the tenth of the horse month of the hare year (which will be the date of Milarepa’s death in this text). There will be no explanation as to why Gampopa does not return. Later versions such as Tsangnyön’s have the unlikely scenario of both Gampopa and Rechungpa simply forgetting this extremely important instruction, which they are *both* described as having received.

Milarepa has a significant conversation with his pupils following Gampopa’s departure. In the Newark manuscript, however, this is part of the last conversation Milarepa has with Gampopa before returning to his other pupils.

Milarepa says that he has had a dream of a yellow bird flying to Ü where it is joined upon a rocky mountain by 500 ducks, which are presumably the ruddy Brahminy ducks that often symbolise the monastic community. The number represents the approximate number of pupils that Gampopa was later said to have gathered around him. Milarepa’s explanation of this dream involves a prophecy that plays a vital role in the legitimisation of the monastic lineage of Gampopa, but there is an interesting variation between the three surviving editions of this text.

The Newark version (from a Gelukpa monastery in Amdo) is usually the least reliable and appears to be the most corrupt in this instance. It does not, like the other two editions,

have an introduction in which Milarepa returns to his pupils and then tells them of the dream and its meaning, referring to Gampopa as 'that scholar-doctor' *(lha rje ston pa des)*. Instead, Milarepa is still with Gampopa and addresses him as, 'You, the scholar-doctor…' *(lha rje ston pa khyod)* before prophesying, 'I am a yogin but all my followers will be solely monks' *(kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la/kho-bo [sic: kho bo'i] rjes 'jug thams cad rab tu byung ba 'ba' zhig yod [sic: yong] bar 'dug)*. This appears to be in direct contradiction with the existence of Rechungpa's lineage, but *kho-bo rjes 'jug* may be a corruption of *kho'i rjes'jug* (his followers), but *kho-bo'i* in the Oxford manuscript, though the Stockholm edition argues against that.[30]

In the Oxford manuscript (which appears to be from a Drukpa Kagyu library in central Tibet), Milarepa refers to the future followers of Gampopa, referred to in the third person pronoun (though this could be the omission of the syllable *bo* from the word *kho-bo'i,* which transforms 'my' into 'his'. Milarepa says, 'I am a yogin, but all *his* followers will be *some* monks' *(kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la/ kho*'*i rjes 'jug thams cad rab tu byung ba 'ga' zhig 'ong bar gda')*.[31]

The Stockholm version (printed at Drakar Taso monastery founded by Lahtsun Rinchen Namgyal) has: 'I am a yogin but *my* monastic followers will be *many' (kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la/kho-bo'i rjes 'jug rab tu byung ba mang po 'ong bar 'dug),*[32] in which the words 'all' *(thams cad),* 'solely' *('ba' zhig)* and 'some' *('ga' zhig)* are not present and 'many' *(mang po)* has been introduced.

This prophecy is not recorded in the earliest biographies of Gampopa, such as that by Lama Shang, a pupil of Gampopa's nephew. The Gampopa biographies have thus undergone a development parallel to those of Milarepa. From simple beginnings there is a growth that corresponds with the growth of the Dakpo Kagyu traditions.

Tsangnyön's version of 1488 is based upon the Stockholm variant, which is evidence for its early existence; and as the Newark version creates an anomaly in terms of Kagyu history, the Stockholm variant is probably closer to the original form.

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* Gampopa hears of Milarepa's death and receives relics, such as his staff, from a merchant. In Tsangnyön's version, Rechungpa, who has been miraculously transposed to the cremation, will take on the merchant's role.

Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's Clouds of Blessings

The earliest surviving description of Rechungpa attending Milarepa's cremation is found in Shamarpa Khachö Wangpo's *Clouds of Blessings*.[33] Milarepa is said to have been beyond death and his body vanished, leaving only his clothes behind, but yet there is a description of a more normal death, as perceived by 'impure beings'. However, as the narrative unfolds this proves to also be the perception of all his principal pupils! Rechungpa is at this time living in Loro, in present-day Tsona county in southern Tibet, bordering both Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. He is told of Milarepa's passing by a *ḍākiṇī* in a vision, and travels a distance of over 300 miles, as the bird flies, by foot, with miraculous speed, but his journey is interrupted by meeting an emanation of Milarepa, who causes him to stop for a drink of water, thus delaying his arrival by a week! This is for the sake of the narrative in which he has to arrive late, however much miraculous speed he has. On Rechungpa's eventual arrival, he sings and Milarepa comes back to life

within the flames in response. Tsangnyön Heruka will retell this passage from Shamarpa with greater dramatic power.

Tsangnyön Heruka and his pupils

Tsangnyön Heruka, in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* rewrites significant episodes from *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* (or chooses to compile striking variants) so as to create a version of Milarepa and Rechungpa's relationship that has become almost universally accepted as the 'true' version.

Tsangnyön brings the episode of Gampopa's stay with Milarepa forward, so that it follows soon after Rechungpa's return from India, and before Rechungpa's first departure to Ü. Tsangnyön also provides an elaborated form of the life of Gampopa that includes such details as Milarepa emanating as beggars who instigate in Gampopa the wish to come and meet him.

At the point in the narrative when Milarepa asks three pupils to report their dreams to him, the third pupil is Shiwa Ö and not Seben Repa as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. Shiwa Ö's dream of a sun entering his heart has a similar meaning to that of Seben Repa's dream—he will not benefit many beings in his lifetime, but will be reborn in a Buddha's realm. Rechungpa's dream, however, has similar imagery to that of Seben Repa 's dream. It takes place at the junction of three valleys, though without the fire, and as in his own dream from that text, Rechungpa makes a great noise, though this time by shouting, not by blowing a conch. The salt-laden donkey does not appear. Gampopa is troubled by a quite different dream than the one he had in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*. In this dream he kills many people. Milarepa declares Gampopa's dream to be auspicious and even declares that at last a son has been born to him and his work has reached its conclusion. Rechungpa's apparently good dream leads to a strong rebuke, unlike anything we have previously seen in the Rechungpa literature; it is a condemnation that has nevertheless popularly adhered to the image of Rechungpa in Tibetan culture. Milarepa declares that Rechungpa, because of having disobeyed him three times, will be reborn three more times in three different valleys, and will be a famous scholar in each of those lifetimes. The implication is that he will fail to reach complete buddhahood in this lifetime, whereas Gampopa will. The three occasions of disobedience are never explained, and what they could be is purely a matter for speculation, for this precedes his going to Ü against Milarepa's wishes (although in Gyadangpa, of course, he went on Milarepa's command). This passage is evidently a piece of stray narrative inserted into the text. Nevertheless there have been attempts to identify these three rebirths of Rechungpa in Tibet.

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* (apart from the Newark manuscript which has Milarepa addressing Gampopa) Milarepa describes a dream to his other pupils after Gampopa has left. The dream is enhanced in this version, for it is a vulture—not a yellow bird—that flies to the peak of a jewel, not a mountain, though its landing site is still situated in the district of Ü. The 500 ducks gather around the vulture, but they also disperse throughout the land. The substitution of a vulture for the initial bird eliminates the symbolism of Gampopa the monk-bird being surrounded by other duck-monks. The vulture is meant to contrast the yogin, that is, Milarepa, with the monks, but this results in an internal contradiction, for it is Gampopa who leaves for Ü. As mentioned earlier,

Milarepa's interpretation of the dream reveals that Tsangnyön based *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* on a version of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* that accords with the Stockholm edition. In Tsangnyön, Milarepa relates the dream and its meaning to Milarepa's other pupils; he omits 'my' *(kho-bo'i)* and 'followers' *(rjes-'jug")* becomes 'afterwards' *(rje-su);* and he adds 'also' *(yang),* implying that he is addressing non-monastic practitioners.

Thus in this version, Milarepa says 'I am a yogin but *afterwards* there will *also* be many monks' *(kho bo rnal 'byor pa yin pa la rjes su rab tu byung ba mang po yang 'ong bar 'dug).*[34]

The fact that this declaration is made by Milarepa to his own non-monastic community intensifies its import, and the passage is often quoted to demonstrate the legitimacy of the monastic Dakpo Kagyu lineage in spite of its yogin origins.

In *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* there was a final conversation between Rechungpa and Milarepa, in which Milarepa stated that he had given him alone every instruction, but that one instruction remained that had not been given to anyone, and then he revealed to Rechungpa his meditation-hardened bottom. This passage also appears in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* but with one significant difference: Gampopa replaces Rechungpa, and it occurs in the description of Gampopa's departure.

This could not have been an error due to Tsangnyön's lapse of memory, as he was evidently familiar with *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and knowingly created this version, which may have been based on one of his visions of Milarepa's life, or, more probably, was influenced by an oral narrative that was already in circulation, inspired by the Rechungpa version. The Gampopa version need not have been cynically created, but could have been spontaneously formed from a natural osmosis between memories, where events and details are unconsciously transferred from one person to another to form a subjectively more pleasing or inspiring version of events. This new account dovetails perfectly with Tsangnyön's portrayal of Gampopa as Milarepa's principal successor, diminishing the inherent contradiction found in earlier texts.

This may seem perverse coming from an author who was a holder and transmitter of the Demchok Nyengyu. However, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal records that in reply to a question by a certain Lama Namkha Wangpo *(Bla-ma gNam-mkha' dBang-po),* Tsangnyön declared, 'My lineage is renowned as the Dakpo Kagyu.'[35] Thus, Tsangnyön identified himself principally with the Gampopa tradition, and in particular with the Drukpa Kagyu, in which the Nyengyu had formed an essential component since the time of its first masters: Lingrepa *(Gling Ras-pa)* and Tsangpa Gyaré *(gTsang-pa rGya-ras).* Thus the Rechungpa lineage, together with its lineage biographies, were already contained within the Drukpa Kagyu long before Tsangnyön's lifetime, and it could even claim, based on the size of its tradition, to be the principal propagator of Rechungpa's teachings. This monastic tradition even preserved the lifestyle of the yogin tradition. Even present day Drukpa Kagyu institutions have senior monks join a yogin community within the monastery, adopting the yogin's garb and hairstyle while remaining a small but central part of the monastery.

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal, a principal pupil of Tsangnyön's, reveals his Drukpa Kagyu identity by writing, in addition to his biography of Rechungpa, biographies of the Drukpa Kagyu masters Pamo Drupa, Lingrepa and Götsangpa *(rGod-tshang-pa),* with whom Götsang Repa has been confused.

Another pupil of Tsangnyön's, Jampal Chölha (*'Jam-dpal Chos-lha),* wrote a biography of Yang-gönpa *(Yang-dgon-pa),* a principal pupil of Götsangpa. Sanggyé Darpo, another pupil of Tsangnyön, also wrote a biography of Götsangpa.

Sang-gyé Darpo appears to diminish the space allocated to Rechungpa in his *The History of the Kagyu Dharma (bKa-brgyud Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas)* and the list of Milarepa's pupils begins with the 'sun-like Gampopa' followed by 'the moon-like Rechungpa'.[36] Nevertheless, in his later section on Rechungpa, he is not only described as 'the holder of the Khandro Nyengyu *(mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud)* or Rechung Nyengyu *(Ras-chung sNyan-rgyud)'* and 'famous as the sun and moon'[37] but also as 'the supreme heart son of Milarepa',[38] thus demonstrating Rechungpa's ambivalent status within the Drukpa Kagyu literature in the context of allegiance towards the lineages of both Gampopa and Rechungpa.

In Tsangnyön, Rechungpa's final departure is primarily the result of his own strong desire to go to Ü, so that the poor offerings given to Milarepa are merely the catalyst that makes him leave. Thus, he does so against Milarepa's wishes, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* but in *The Hundred Thousand Songs* the song-dialogue between Milarepa and Rechungpa is different. Milarepa states that he has sworn an oath to his followers not to let him go, but 'as all oaths are dreams and illusions' *(mna 'kun rmi lam sgyu ma yin)*[39] he gives his permission. Milarepa does not, as in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* instruct Rechungpa to perform sets of hundreds of devotional practices. There is another group of songs that are sung before Rechungpa's departure and it is at this point that the prophecy of a bitch that will seize him by the leg is given.

As Rechungpa leaves, Milarepa becomes concerned that Rechungpa did not look back as he departed. Therefore he emanates as seven yogins that question him (omitting the ant and bandits of *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*).

Afterwards, the female lay followers gather to hear Milarepa's complaint that 'Rechungpa has no shame, no conscience, no commitment' *(ras chung pa la khrel ngo-tsha dam tshig mi 'dug)*.[40] They listen to a newer version of Milarepa's lament on Rechungpa's departure, which has such lines as 'The son, like a white conch-lion, has gone to Ü; the old father, like a grey fox, has been left behind' *(bu dung seng dkar mo dang 'dra ba dbus su thal/pha rgan wa sky a dang 'dra ba shul du bar)*.[41] When the patrons attempt to console him, he sings a song that reveals he clairvoyantly knows about the good offerings they had brought for Rechungpa and which they had hidden when they found out that Rechungpa had gone. Ashamed, they later bring him their best offerings with renewed faith. Thus this version, while enhancing Milarepa's status, has further blackened the character of Rechungpa's image.

His return visit takes place after the Lhachik Dembu episode, which will be examined later. In *The Hundred Thousand Songs* it is included in its third and final section, which consists of miscellany, for the Gampopa chapter is given the climactic position of the penultimate chapter in the section that is devoted to Milarepa's human pupils.

The miscellany section's chapters on Rechungpa include much of the dream interpretation that was found in Gyadangpa. However, although Milarepa still instructs Rechungpa on his future activity, his demonstration of the state of his bottom and the accompanying declaration that Rechungpa alone has received all his teaching is omitted, for this has already been used for the description of Gampopa's departure.

Milarepa instructs Rechungpa to return at a date, which will prove to be that of Milarepa's death, though Rechungpa forgets to come. Unlike earlier works, with the exception of Shamarpa, Rechungpa arrives for the cremation for he is notified of Milarepa's death in a vision. This episode is related in *The Life of Milarepa,* which is *The Hundred Thousand Songs*' companion text. Rechungpa plays a central role in *The Life of Milarepa,* for it is on his exhortation (inspired by Bharima in a dream) that Milarepa relates his life. He also plays the principal role at the cremation, for the fire refuses to light until his arrival. When he arrives, the drama is heightened by Rechungpa not being allowed access to the body. This is accomplished by the narrator's device of having more recent pupils, who do not know Rechungpa by sight, being posted at the perimeter of the ceremony and refusing him admission. They are unconvincingly able to prevent his entry, in spite of Rechungpa's mastery of miraculous powers by this time: he had, after all, just performed a two-month journey in one morning, itself a necessary narrative device to place Rechungpa at the cremation in spite of his residence in distant Loro *(Lo-ro)*. Rechungpa sings a supplication to Milarepa[42] and the sound of his voice causes the fire to ignite spontaneously. Even though the assembly now recognises and welcomes Rechungpa, he is so put out by his treatment that he refuses to approach the cremation until he finishes his song. The song brings Milarepa briefly back to life amidst the flames, where he sits upon them as if they are lotus petals and delivers a final praise and a final reprimand to Rechungpa, asking him not to take offence, and concluding with a song of affection to him. Then he returns to the business of having his corpse burned up.

Following the cremation, Rechungpa sets out to meet Gampopa (who is also late) and gives him the bad news and some relics. Rechungpa then accompanies Gampopa to his monastery, where he gives him the transmission of the Nyengyu.

Neither Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal nor Götsang Repa follow Tsangnyön's example by including Rechungpa's miraculous return to Milarepa's cremation, but Götsang Repa does refer to it briefly in a single sentence[43] that is clearly a summary of the passage in *The Life of Milarepa*. Therefore, it appears unlikely that the cremation episode appeared in *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* their source for Rechungpa's life-story following his departure from Milarepa.

Rechungpa and Lhachik Dembu

A central episode in the middle part of Rechungpa's life is his 'marriage' to Lhachik Dembu. This is also of interest in terms of the role and status of the female in the lives of twelfth-century yogins, at least as seen from the sixteenth century.

Lhachik Dembu in Gyadangpa

According to Gyadangpa, Rechungpa, already accompanied by his first pupil Ra Shernang *(Ra Sher-snang)* as an attendant, comes to the valley of Yarlung *(Yarlung),* famous as the ancestral seat of the ancient Tibetan monarchy. The local ruler becomes his patron and gives him his daughter, Lhachik Dembu, as his 'servant', an euphemism for his consort in sexual practices.

Rechungpa, Lhachik Dembu and Ra Shernang go to receive *Mahāmudrā* instruction from the Nepalese Asu. They work as a team, with Lhachik Dembu memorising the lineage histories, Ra Shernang memorising the *Mahāmudrā* songs, and Rechungpa 'contemplating the meaning' *(don la bsams)*.[44] Lhachik Dembu encourages an unhappy Rechungpa, who is on the point of abandoning receiving these instructions, to persevere, and she also collects a barley tax from the Yarlung residents in order to finance his studies.

Later they all go to live in faraway Loro *(Lo-ro),* which along with Jarpo *(Byar-po)* was to be the principal residence of Rechungpa for the rest of his life. However, Lhachik Dembu becomes angry with Rechungpa. This makes him identify her with a 'russet bitch' that Milarepa had prophesied would attack him. The next day, after a night of prayer and meditation, he does not get up early, which infuriates Lhachik Dembu even further so that she attacks him with a stick. Rechungpa decides she has broken her religious commitments and abandons her immediately, in spite of her instant pleas for forgiveness and her claim that she had been temporarily possessed by a demon.[45]

The motive for his peremptory departure, instead of exercising the Buddhist virtue of patience and compassion, may be clarified by the contents of a text from within Rechungpa's lineage, which at least explains the viewpoint of the followers of his lineage upon telling or hearing this story.

Examining the Signs of the dākinīs (Mkha'-'gro 'i mtshan-brtags), is a text that is attributed to Rechungpa himself and is entirely devoted to the evaluation of women as prospective partners in sexual practice. This text differentiates women into three classes, in descending order: lotus, conch and picture. Each is subdivided into best, medium and inferior, making a total of nine classes of women, distinguished by various physical, vocal and mental characteristics.

Recognising these different classes is crucial; for example, the best lotus woman, if used as a partner, will bring liberation in one night, while the medium will take three months. The inferior lotus woman, however, will in a month cause a decline in meditation; after two months there will be a decline in merit, complexion and health, and after a year, death will result. As for the lowest 'picture woman', Rechungpa warns that one should not befriend her for even an instant.

The distinguishing characteristics of the lower class of woman are primarily behaviour and mental states, such as anger and jealousy, so that any woman who proves difficult to live with could become in the yogin's eyes dangerous to him, both spiritually and physically. From that point of view, it is no surprise that Rechungpa went back to live amongst a community of yogin practitioners, where sexual relationships were divorced from any semblance of a lasting marital relationship. Gyadangpa relates that Lhachik Dembu subsequently married a maternal uncle, who then fell ill with *dze*. As explained earlier, though often translated as leprosy, this can refer to any one of a range of disfiguring skin illnesses. However, her husband attributed his illness to *her* treatment of Rechungpa and so they went in search of him to obtain his forgiveness.

They find him in Jarpo. Ra Shernang promises to help her, arranges a meeting and encourages Rechungpa to forgive the weeping Lhachik Dembu. First, Rechungpa belittles her in a song addressed to 'the lama beater' *(bla ma dung ba'i tho mo che)*[46] and then, showing a tiny bit of sympathy, describes her fallen state in a song that includes the lines, 'You abandoned your guru and went off with your uncle/[But] you've ended up as a

constant nurse, haven't you?' *(bla ma spangs nas zhang dang 'grogs/nad g.yog rgyun du ma babs sam)*.[47] The song appears to hint at another narrative, which we shall see in *The Blue Annals,* in which rather than Rechungpa walking out on her, she left him for her uncle!

Rechungpa encourages her to plead for forgiveness. She does, he takes her as his pupil, and the uncle recovers his health.

Gyadangpa consulted a lost text, apparently written by Rechungpa's pupil Khyungtsangpa, who stated that when he met Rechungpa, the uncle had died suddenly the previous year, but Lhachik Dembu was still alive. She had become a good practitioner, and was a living example of Rechungpa's compassion, because he cared for her in spite of the way she had previously treated him.[48]

Lhachik Dembu in The Blue Annals

The Blue Annals touches only briefly on this incident, but provides us with a distinct variant that is not found elsewhere and provides an alternative, or an additional, cause for Rechungpa's abandoning her. It states:

> Then he stayed in Yarlung *(Yar-klungs)* and had a *mudrā* (consort) named Lhachik (lHa-gcig). She slept with another man, and, saddened, he ran away.[49]

This may give some explanation for the lines in the Gyadangpa song given above. For as we have seen on a few occasions, the songs do not always agree with their accompanying prose.

Lhachik Dembu in The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje version of Rechungpa's relationship with Lhachik Dembu takes place in the episode entitled *Lhachik Dembu (lHa-cig[50] lDem-bu'i[51] skor[52])*.[53] It is, as we have come to expect, far more dramatic. This text portrays Rechungpa less favourably than Gyadangpa did, but its depiction of Lhachik Dembu is much worse. She is not described as accompanying or helping Rechungpa in his studies under Asu, nor does she live in a hermitage with him, but remains living at her home in Yarlung.

She first appears infuriated that a beggar has called at the door, only to change her mind when she sees how good-looking Rechungpa is. This physical attraction is the reason she invites him in to see her sick father.

Rechungpa cures her father who becomes his patron, giving him both his province and Lhachik Dembu. He lives with them at the palace for three years. Milarepa, however, unhappy at Rechungpa's new life style, comes and transforms himself into three pleading, dying beggars to whom Rechungpa throws a turquoise from the top of the palace. Lhachik Dembu is furious when she discovers what he has done.

Rechungpa's night of prayers and meditation, which featured in Gyadangpa, is not mentioned. The next morning, Lhachik Dembu, to show her displeasure, instead of serving him his usual breakfast, sends a maid with some more basic fare. When she hears that he has not eaten it, she comes and throws it over him and hits him. Rechungpa immediately changes into his cotton robe and leaves. A repentant Lhachik Dembu, enlists the help of Ra Shernang. He is named Rinchen Drak (Rin-chen Grags) in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* and appears suddenly without any previous introduction—evidence that *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* is using extracts from another source, in this case somewhat unskilfully. This introduces a long episode of five songs that Rechungpa sings in answer to the pleas of Lhachik Dembu, Ra Shernang and the local populace, which portray deficiencies in himself as well as Lhachik Dembu. For example, he sings 'Staring at Lhachik Dembu's face, I was not aware I'd forgotten the mother ḍākinīs' *(lha cig gi gdong la bltas bltas nas/ma mkha' 'gro brjed pa ma tshor zin)*.[54]

His final song, though it declares his intention to return to Lhachik Dembu, is sung in order to deceive her, for she is clinging tightly to his cotton robe. The song ends by asking her not to pull at his robe or it will tear and it's all he has to wear. However, the moment she lets go, he makes his escape, and she, now doubting the sincerity of his last song, is in hot pursuit.

Rechungpa reaches the river. As no boat is available, he uses his robe as a raft and rows himself over with his staff. The text says (though this episode was not previously mentioned) that on his first arrival he had done the same thing without even getting his robe wet, but now, as a result of being contaminated by his relationship, he sinks to his waist. He sings a song to Lhachik Dembu from the far bank and departs. She crosses in a boat only to be told that he has fled with such miraculous speed that she will not be able to overtake him even on horseback. Such miraculous prowess seems to make its appearance only when convenient for the narrative.

Not only is Lhachik Dembu's personality painted in unpleasant colours, her fate is much harsher. Her father wants her to be executed for driving Rechungpa away. His ministers intercede, but only from a sense of propriety, not out of compassion for Lhachik Dembu. Instead of a death sentence, she is condemned to be given away to the first person that comes to the palace the next morning.

Lhachik Dembu spends the night hoping for a handsome young man, but it turns out to be a pauper, who, grammatically, appears to be a person named Galé *(dGa'-le)* from the region of Shang *(Zhang),* afflicted with an epidermal illness, that is, *dze (zhang gi mdze-po dga' le)*. *Zhang* in later versions will be understood to mean maternal uncle. She leaves with him, acting as his servant and leading his donkey. She herself develops *dzekya (mdze-skya),* which as mentioned in Chapter 5, is vitiligo.

Rechungpa returns to Milarepa. The return is narrated in a subsequent chapter entitled *The Meeting in the Shrine Room (mChod*[1] *khang zhal 'jal*[55]*)*. Rechungpa sees the turquoise he gave to the beggars on Milarepa's shrine and realises that they were Milarepa. It is after this meeting that he takes his final leave of Milarepa and returns to the Loro region.

Later, Lhachik Dembu hears of Rechungpa's ability to cure hundreds and thousands of people who have epidermal illnesses. She and her companion seek out Rechungpa's residence and she asks Ra Shernang to go to Rechungpa to intercede for her, which he does.

Rechungpa is at first dismissive, saying 'Her faith is in turquoises' *(mo la g.yu la dad pa cig yod)*[56] and as a rebuke sends her some. She replies with a message that she would rather die than be unable to repent her actions towards him. Rechungpa eventually agrees to meet her, but only if a curtain is drawn between them. In the subsequent dialogue there are songs sung by Lhachik Dembu as well as Rechungpa. One of Rechungpa's songs, however, is a variant of the one in Gyadangpa, and does not agree with the narrative. For example, it has the line, 'You left the guru and went with the uncle/ [but now] you're experiencing the suffering of being a nurse, aren't you?' *(khyod bla ma bzhag nas zhang dang 'grogs/nad g.yogs gi sdug bsngal ma spyod dam)*.

Finally, Rechungpa forgives Lhachik Dembu, gives her purification practices, gold for making images, and so on, so that both she and her companion are cured. She later attains realisation through the Nyengyu practices and becomes a teacher of others.

The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje intensifies initial difficulties and defects for Milarepa, Rechungpa and Lhachik Dembu, so that the drama and the spiritual accomplishment against all odds has more impact.

Lhachik Dembu in Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal

Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal's version is merely a summary of Götsang Repa's, and may be a summary of the contents of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*. Lhatsun omits all songs from the episode of Rechungpa's abandonment of Lhachik Dembu.[57]

Lhachik Dembu in Götsang Repa

The version found in Götsang Repa, which describes these two episodes in elaborate detail,[58] is very similar to *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* or one of its sources. In Götsang Repa, Lhachik Dembu goes in search of Rechungpa twice; the second time is *after* she has been condemned to death by her father, and it is on that occasion that he sings to her from the other side of the river.[59] Their eventual meeting (after a considerable time and a number of chapters on Rechungpa's activities) is much more difficult for her to accomplish, and she and her companions, who now number 100 sick people, have to do numerous practices of purification in-between two meetings with Rechungpa.[60] Either *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje* deliberately simplified these passages, or, as is more likely, Götsang Repa's version is an elaboration of them.

Lhachik Dembu's sick companion is identified as someone named Galé *(sGa-le,* which was *dGa-le* in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje)*[61] who is *mo rang gi zhang gi rigs,* which means 'of the family of her *shang* (i.e. maternal uncle)', in contrast to 'the *dze*-afflicted man from Shang' *[zhang gi mdze-po]* in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje*).[62] Götsang Repa provides another motive for the abandonment of Lhachik Dembu. Rechungpa, refusing to listen to Rinchen Drak (a.k.a Ra Shernang), warns him that even drinking water from the same valley as one who has broken their commitments will result in rebirth in the worst of hells, the Avīci hell.[63] Turning against one's guru is certainly considered the deepest sin in *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, (although Rechungpa as portrayed in Götsang Repa does not have a spotless past in this matter). Unfortunately for Lhachik Dembu, in her case, her guru was also her husband.

As in *The Life and Songs of Shepay Dorje,* during Rechungpa's stay in Yarlung *(Yar-klungs)* he goes with Ra Shernang to study with Asu,[64] but Lhachik Dembu is not said to accompany them.

It is only in Götsang Repa that Rechungpa establishes a retreat in the Yarlung valley,[65] which is said to be the site around which the Rechungpuk *(Ras-chung-phug)* grew, where Tsangnyön Heruka died, and where Götsang Repa wrote his biography of Rechungpa. However, no other biography links Rechungpa to this now revered site.

Lhachik Dembu's historicity is attested to by Sumpa's colophon, reproduced by Götsang Repa, in which he states:

> The middle part: the Lhachik *(lHa-gcig)* chapter and so on, is as told by the attendant [Rinchen Drak], and was later corrected by the guru and Lhachik, and then written out.[66]

Unfortunately, until a copy of *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel* itself is discovered we cannot be certain whether the version presented by Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa is a faithful reproduction of its contents.

Götsang Repa says that seven or eight years after Rechungpa and Lhachik Dembu's reunion, Lhachik Dembu died amongst auspicious signs and her relics were placed in a *stūpa* consecrated by Rechungpa.[67] Rechungpa declared that she had been reborn in Alakāvatī as the chief of 16,000 queens of Vajrapāṇi. This is to be seen in the context of Götsang Repa's identification of Rechungpa as an incarnation of Vajrapāni, as we shall see later.

These texts show a woman who is on one hand capable of attaining spiritual realisation and being a full member of the practising community, but on the other hand is living entirely under male authority. Even her spiritual path begins by her being given to Rechungpa as a gift, just as she is later given to the sick beggar, and even her very life is portrayed to be at the mercy of male authority. Even her transcendent rebirth has a secondary status as one of sixteen thousand wives. We shall see another instance of the difficult position of a woman within the description of Rechungpa's pupils.

Rechungpa and other teachers

The bulk of the Götsang Repa biography concerns Rechungpa's encounters with other teachers and his own pupils, almost all involving songs. This will not be examined in detail here.

The encounters with other teachers invariably provide an opportunity for demonstrating Rechungpa's superiority over them, and thus the superiority of his own instructions and lineage. This is common in Tibetan biographies, and even the same incident is used in different texts to demonstrate the superiority of two different lamas.

An example of this occurs in Rechungpa's travelling to Nepal in the company of Kyitön *(sKyi-ston)* and Ra Lotsawa, which we have seen described in Chapter 7. Kyitön, which is written *Kyi-ston* in Gyadangpa, and *Khyi-ston* in Götsang Repa, was a *Dzogchen* master. We have seen the rather pathetic inferiority of his personality and teaching to those of Rechungpa, and also how this episode served to establish Rechungpa's

superiority over Ra Lotsawa, the master who was the source of the Yamāntaka tradition in Tibet, through Kyitön's denunciation of him as a proud and grandiose lama.

In the biography of Ra Lotsawa, however, we see the same incident from a different perspective, that of members of Ra's lineage. This also presents Kyitön's claim that Rechungpa is superior to Ra, though here it is caused by Kyitön's anger that Ra did not respectfully stand up to greet him.[68] However, this biography provides an unexpected conclusion to this episode. While still in Kathmandu, Kyitön kills someone in a drunken quarrel and is condemned to death. Ra Lotsawa ransoms him with sixty ounces of gold. Kyitön changes his mind about Ra Lotsawa and asks for instruction from him. Ra Lotsawa wryly replies, 'You are a true Dharma practitioner, so why take teachings from me, when I'm filled with the pride of being a big man?' *(khyod chos pa tshad ldan zhag nga mi chen po 'i nga rgyal gyis khengs pa la chos zhu'am)*.[69] Kyitön, thus rebuffed, regrets his previous words but is too embarrassed to come and see Ra Lotsawa again.[70] Unfortunately, we do not have the Kyitön version of events.

In another parallel, Ra Lotsawa is depicted as teaching Ngok Dodé (1090–1166), the pupil and successor of Ngoktön, one of Marpa's principal pupils, and it is made clear that it is Ra's instructions that bring him to liberation.[71] Ra also liberates Marpa Sonam Rinchen (*Mar-pa bod-nams* Rin-chen), who was a pupil and relative of Marpa, and a holder of his lineage, but who had failed to gain success through fourteen years of practising Marpa's instruction.[72] This establishes the superiority of Ra Lotsawa's instruction to those of the Marpa Kagyu lineages.

Furthermore, through his superior sorcery, Ra Lotsawa kills Marpa's son, Darma Dodé, whose own sorcery attacks had failed to harm Ra Lotsawa.[73] Also, Ra Lotsawa magically slays those pupils of Marpa who try to prevent him from paying homage at Marpa's tomb; he then passes through its walls and there spontaneously appear miraculous relics for him to take away, thus showing that even Marpa, after his death, honours the lama who killed his son.[74]

Similarly, Rechungpa encounters a pupil of Marpa and demonstrates his superiority over him. This pupil is Tsurtön Wang-ngé *(Tshur-ston dBang-nge),* one of Marpa's four most important pupils, and an important name in the early history of the Kagyu.

In Gyadangpa, though Rechungpa receives instruction from Tsurtön Wang-ngé, Rechungpa is not impressed by him and demonstrates a superior control over breath by putting cotton-wool on his nose and holding his breath for a day, so that the cotton-wool does not move.

In Götsang Repa, Rechungpa demonstrates his superiority to an even greater extent: by both levitating and sinking down into the floor. In this manner, Rechungpa demonstrates not only his own superiority, but also, by implication, the superiority of Milarepa's transmission over that of his fellow pupil Tsurtön Wang-ngé. This is important for the self-identification of the Dakpo Kagyu as the principal descendants of Marpa.

Rechungpa's transmission of teachings based on *Mahāmudrā* songs was to prove important for future generations. He received this transmission from the Nepalese master Asu, who was living in Tibet. The biographies relate that Milarepa gave Rechungpa permission for this and even said that Rechungpa was free to abandon his teachings if he found Asu's to be better. The biographies, however, emphasise Rechungpa's dissatisfaction with Asu, both in his style of teaching and as an individual. At one point

Rechungpa sings a song containing an implied criticism of Asu, whose face darkens with anger and he breaks off his teaching by going into retreat for a while. Such a disrespectful attitude to one's teacher might appear to conflict with the *vajrayāna* ideals that the text is promoting. However, the biography is presenting Asu in a manner that does not divide the focus of the reader's devotion, so that the transmission from Milarepa through Rechungpa remains inviolably superior.

Rechungpa also encounters Kadampa teachers who are well known in the history of that school and these episodes are certainly not to be found in *their* biographies.

In Götsang Repa, the monks in the monastery of Shönnu Ö *(gZhon-nu 'Od),* a.k.a Chayulpa *(Bya-yul-pa)* (1075–1138),[75] at first eject Rechungpa when he arrives there. However, when Chayulpa hears Rechungpa singing outside, he sheds tears. *The Blue Annals* includes a brief form of this account up until the point when Chayulpa begins weeping,[76] but not what follows in Götsang Repa's biography: Chayulpa sends his monks in search of Rechungpa to invite him into his private rooms. There, over a period of three weeks Rechungpa gives him the Nyengyu instructions. The monks subsequently complain that this has had a deleterious effect on their leader's normally strict conduct, but, nevertheless, it is through the benefits of this practice, Götsang Repa emphasises, that Chayulpa was able to become a teacher of many pupils. A Nyengyu transmission named 'the tradition of Rechungpa' *(Ras-chung lugs)* is thus said to originate with Chayulpa, commencing with a secret transmission from Chayulpa to his principal pupil, Tsangpa Mikyö Dorje *(gTsang-pa Mi-bskyod rDo-rje)* (1077–1161).[77]

Later, Chayulpa has a monk-pupil who becomes a great scholar that had come to the conclusion that such study was of no benefit. Chayulpa secretly confides to him that he is right. Chayulpa tells him about the Nyengyu lineage that he practices and explains that this is kept secret from all the other pupils, who are merely studying logic, because they are not yet ready to hear the truth.[78] Chayulpa secretly sends the monk to Rechungpa. Thus we see here the inferiority of the Kadampa tradition being declared by one of its principal masters!

Similarly, Götsang Repa describes how Rechungpa taught, in their private chambers, the Kadampa abbots Neu Zurpa Yeshe Bar *(sNe'u Zur-pa Ye-shes 'Bar)* (1042–1118)[79] who lost his habitual dislike of yogins on meeting Rechungpa (and who *The Blue Annals* states became a friend of Milarepa), and Chen-nga Tsultrim Bar *(sPyan-snga Tshul-khrims 'Bar)* (1038–1103), the teacher of Chayulpa (who according to *The Blue Annals* was considered to have miraculous powers that rivalled, or even superseded, those of Milarepa).[80] However, the dates of both these masters, particularly the latter, cast doubt upon the historicity of their meeting with Rechungpa.[81]

The biography therefore is proud to list a number of Kadampa masters amongst Rechungpa's pupils,[82] even though they are secret pupils or were—as in the case of Cha Chekawa Yeshe Dorje *(Bya 'Chad-kha-ba Ye-shes rDo-rje)* (1101–75)[83] his former pupils before entering the Kadampa tradition.[84]

Rechungpa also taught Gampopa's pupil Dusum Khyenpa *(Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa),* the first Karmapa, the founder of the Karma Kagyu tradition. Even Gampopa himself is listed amongst the pupils of Rechungpa.

Rechungpa and his pupils

Rechungpa had numerous male and female pupils. There is plentiful material on this subject. Two figures particularly important for the future transmission of Rechungpa's lineage and his biography are Sumtön *(Sum-ston),* a.k.a Sumpa *(Sum-pa),* and the monk Khyungtsangpa.

Sumpa acted as Rechungpa's attendant and was constantly present at Rechungpa's teachings. He wrote his own account of Rechungpa's death, which he included in his lost biography of Rechungpa: *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*. He also included in this text his fellow pupil, Yang-gönpa's *(Yang-dgon-pa)* account of Rechungpa's death and an entire chapter is formed from a text in question and answer form by another fellow pupil, Gyalwa Lo *(Gyal-ba Lo),* which records Rechungpa's answers on meditation instruction, and which we find in its apparent entirety within Götsang Repa's biography of Rechungpa. These three—Sumpa, Yang-gönpa and Gyalwa Lo—were the principal pupils of Rechungpa within his own somewhat peripatetic community.

In contrast, Khyungtsangpa stayed only briefly with Rechungpa, and thereafter lived at a considerable distance, with no further contact with Rechungpa's community. According to Khyungtsangpa, he covertly received the complete transmission of the Nyengyu from Rechungpa, who instructed him to stay away from his other pupils and not let it be known that he had received the Nyengyu transmission from him until after he had died. The reason Khyungtsangpa gave for this peculiar arrangement was that he was a monk, while Rechungpa's community of practitioners was non-monastic. Rechungpa even had a reputation for not wishing to teach his lineage to monks. This non-monasticism is unsurprising considering the Nyengyu teachings' emphasis upon the practice of sexual yoga.

Khyungtsangpa's eventual claim to be a holder of Rechungpa's lineage naturally gave rise to suspicion. For example, Lingrepa *(gLing-ras-pa),* who was the source of the Drukpa Kagyu, was at first a pupil of Khyungtsangpa. His biographies state that he doubted the authenticity of Khyungtsangpa's teaching until he subsequently studied under Sumpa.[85]

Although Rechungpa had a female teacher as well as female pupils, and though they were not only needed for sexual practice, but also were considered in some cases to be realised and their relics were enshrined, it would unfortunately be incorrect to project contemporary views of female equality onto this community. Miranda Shaw gives Rechungpa's life as an example[86] in her argument that 'Women's sense of freedom from male authority in this movement was reinforced by the fact that women were not dependent upon male approval for religious advancement either in theory or in practice.'[87] Sadly, the details of Rechungpa's life as portrayed in these texts do not appear to confirm this.

If the sorry tale of Lhachik Dembu does not suffice, another of his consorts supplies a further example of the hapless status of women. Rechungpa gives vows and deathbed instruction to a man named Yowa Dawa Drak *(gYo-ba Zla-ba Grags),* who is in the terminal stages of *tsi-tsi dzwo-la* (which is described as a sickness that cannot be cured, even though Rechungpa was said to both suffer from it and cure himself from it in the Varacandra episode). The dying man has a wife named Hobmo Yang-gö *(Hob-mo*

gYang-mgos) and he offers her to Rechungpa, who refuses her, saying that it is the nature of women to have faults and that women capable of maintaining their commitments are as rare as daytime stars. He adds that even women like Lhachik Dembu, who at least confessed her transgressions, were difficult to find. Therefore Yowa Dawa Drak decides to fall back on his alternative plan, which is to kill his wife before he dies, an action which was legally permissible in parts of Tibet.[88] Without attempting to forbid this plan and solely in order to prevent her death, Rechungpa takes her on as his consort.[89] Therefore within this society, as portrayed by Götsang Repa, even in the context of a community of Tantric practitioners, women could have little control over whom they were to be given to in a sexual relationship and even whether they were to be allowed to live or not.

The death of Rechungpa

Rechungpa died at the age of 77 in 1161 (an iron-bird year). Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa both state that the death took place in 1171 (an iron-hare year). Gö Shönnu Pal in *The Blue Annals* disagrees with the latter date which he attributes to the distorting influence of the Siddharājñī and Amitāyus story, which necessitated the lengthening of Rechungpa's life-span to match its prophecy. Gö Shönnu Pal states that according to Rechungpa's own pupils he died in his seventy-eighth year. Presumably his source was Sumpa's *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel.* Gö Shönnu Pal's view is supported by other material such as the life-story of Lingrepa (1128–88), which he provides in *The Blue Annals.* In 1162, Lingrepa, then in his thirty-fifth year, goes to see Rechungpa at Loro *(Lo-ro)* only to find that he had died the previous year, and so he studies under Sumpa instead.[90] According to *The Lhorong Dharma History,* Lingrepa went to Loro in his thirty-first year, which would be in 1158, already knowing that Rechungpa had died.[91] This would place Rechungpa's death at an earlier but unlikely date.

In spite of the aberrant date, the main body of the first-person accounts by Sumpa and Yang-gön Pal, which Götsang Repa reproduces, can be assumed to be unadulterated, as they retain their first-person form grammatically. His death took place at the hermitage of Tsekong *(Tshe-skong)* in the Loro area. Aware that death was close, he said that he would not leave his body behind and would pervade all Buddha-realms. Therefore, whatever direction his pupils directed their prayers, they would be fruitful.

At dusk, he told Sumpa to go and meditate, and not approach his cave until dawn, whatever he hears. Sumpa returns to his cabin. At midnight he hears music and sees not only lights but various parts of dancing *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs* appearing and disappearing in the sky. Amongst them, he sometimes saw Rechungpa and sometimes Cakrasaṃvara. He calls other pupils and at sunrise they go up to the cave to find only Rechungpa's clothes and cushion.[92]

This is the basis for the phrase 'who attained the rainbow-body' in the title of Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal's biography of Rechungpa. In the *Dzogchen* tradition, the transmutation of the material nature of the body is said to result in its dissolution into light at death, leaving only the inanimate parts of the body: hair and nails. Among Milarepa and Rechungpa's pupils, however, there are a number who, at the end of their lives, are said to have physically departed for the perfect realms of the buddhas, leaving

behind no physical remnants whatsoever. Similarly, in the case of Rechungpa he does not leaves his hair or nails behind, only his clothes.

It could be argued, from a non-religious point of view, that this cannot be a genuine or truthful account of Rechungpa's death by Sumpa, because deities do not appear in the sky and corpses do not disappear, however holy the person. However, even from that perspective, one has to admit that visions do occur as subjective experiences, and in Götsang Repa, Sumpa's account is a description solely of his own experiences. However, when Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal summarises this passage, the list of people that Sumpa calls is transformed into a list of people who also witness those apparitions in the sky, thus objectifying the visionary experience.[93] Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal presumably assumed that if they had been called they would have seen what Sumpa saw.

There is also a possible explanation other than dematerialisation for the missing corpse. The biography records that on more than one occasion Rechungpa's pupils found his cave empty, and searched the mountains for days for their aged guru before locating him alone in a cave.[94] He had, he explained, simply tired of human company, wished to spend his days alone and had sneaked away without leaving any indication of where he had gone. Though he had failed to escape on those previous occasions, it could be argued that he at last succeeded, for by making his pupils assume he had died, he prevented them from searching for him, which would indeed have allowed him to spend his remaining days in solitude, as he wished, perhaps even with another set of clothes. Though this may be a distasteful explanation from the religious point of view, it is the inevitable result of applying Occam's razor to this ancient knot. Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal's description of the discovery of Rechungpa's disappearance has again a curious variant from Götsang Repa's. He states that a pigeon-sized hole was found in the cave's roof, through which Rechungpa was presumed to have departed, and that Rechungpa's clothes had *also gone* from the room.[95] This could be taken as another misleading summary, with Lhatsun writing 'There were no clothes on the bed' *(gzim mal na na bza'min pa)* for Sumpa's 'there was nothing other than his cushion and clothes' *(na bza'dang bzhugs gdan ma gtogs mi 'dug).* It seems odd that Rechungpa would need to take his clothes along with him into a transcendent, inconceivable state.

Rechungpa as divine incarnation

All surviving texts that pre-date Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa are silent on the subject of Rechungpa's divine status and of his previous lives. However, both these authors give the subject much attention.

The terms *trulpa (sprul-pa),* which is *nirmāṇa* in Sanskrit and *tulku (sprul-sku),* which is *nirmāṇakāya* are basically synonymous as respectively 'emanation' and 'emanation-body'. However, in current Tibetan usage, the former designates the manifestation of a buddha or bodhisattva, while the latter signifies the rebirth of a recently deceased master, who may not necessarily be considered to have attained enlightenment. In fact there is an informal distinction made between high, medium and low *tulkus.* Succession by incarnation originated within the Karma Kagyu in the thirteenth century, but has since become widespread, numbering thousands by this century. Let alone having no canonical basis, there is not even a textual tradition for the Tibetan *tulku* system, and a large

conference of *tulkus* and scholars held by the Dalai Lama in Varanasi in 1990 failed to officially define the subject.

A lama might be the *tulku* of a deceased lama, but also the *trulpa* or emanation of a bodhisattva, such as Avalokiteśvara (as is the case with the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa). An individual can also be recognised as the simultaneous emanation of different bodhisattvas or buddhas. Identifications tend to accumulate over successive, formally recognised rebirths, creating a complex and sometimes paradoxical identity. A lama may also have multiple rebirths. Sometimes there are just two, or there can be three—representing the body, speech and mind; or five, representing those three plus good qualities and activity, but there can be even more. Each of these incarnations can develop a complex identity. Occasionally one child is recognised as the rebirth of two distinct lamas, the one with the higher position tending to subsume the lower.[96] There are even cases when a child is recognised by a lama as his own *tulku* before he has passed away.[97] Sometimes, an 'ordinary' boy is chosen to become a *tulku,* and in a special ceremony invoking *a jñānasattva,* he is transformed into a *tulku*.[98] There are also cases in which, when there is more than one candidate for a position, the runner-up is recognised as an *ö-trul ('Os- 'phrul),* which means 'worthy to be a *tulku*' (though the passive form of the verb 'emanate' is used in the formal title) and this can itself become the beginning of a series of rebirths.[99]

In the earlier centuries of the previous millennium, the identification of an individual master as an emanation was of great significance in that it established that he was already enlightened at birth, and only *seemed* to be benefited by practising the lineage's instructions. His human life was merely a display and was validating the path by practising it. We have seen in Chapter 3 how the earliest biographies of Milarepa identified him as an emanation and that this was still the view of Jamgön Kongtrul *('Jam-mgon Kong-sprul),* in the nineteenth century.[100]

The reverse process appears to have taken place with Rechungpa. In spite of earlier works not giving him the status of an emanation. In the sixteenth century, Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal and Götsang Repa identify him with Vajrapāni, presumably due to the importance of this practice in his life and lineage. As a result, all figures in Buddhist history that have been identified in the Tibetan tradition as Vajrapāṇi emanations automatically become Rechungpa's 'previous lives'. Therefore, Lhatsun and Götsang Repa list the historical and legendary figures of Ānanda, King Indrabodhi of Oḍḍiyāna, and King Sucandra of Śambhala among his previous existences as well as Karmavajra, the source of his lineage of Vajrapāni practices.

In the seventeenth century, Yong-ge Mingyur Dorje (*Yongs-dge Mi-'gyur rDo-rje,* 1641–1708) Rinpoche composed a meditation on the second Karmapa based upon a visionary experience. In both the vision and the practitioner's visualisation, Karma Pakshi is encircled by divine figures. One of these is Rechungpa at the rear, as the embodiment of an accomplished master, and clearly free of any deficiencies:

> To the rear is Rechung Dorje Drak,
> Wearing a white cotton hat in the shape of a horn
> Attractive and handsome, wearing a cotton robe

Handsome and attractive, lovely to see
Holding a vajra and bell in his hands
Wearing the costume of a Yogin
Seated, in vajra posture, upon a lotus, sun and moon.[101]

However, it is interesting to note, that his handsome form, first introduced by Tsangnyön is one of his principal characteristics here. Also, the shape of his hat makes a reference to the yak horn episode. In Götsang Repa, however, there is a song by Rechungpa about his hat, which is probably from *The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel,* in which he comments on the symbolism of all its details.[102] Its general shape is presented in the first line of the song as representing the Vulture-peak Mountain, the sacred site in India where the Buddha taught the Prajñāparamita sūtras.

Representations of Rechungpa usually, but not always, depict him wearing a white hat, but its shape varies considerably. It is always white, but there can be considerable variation in its shape. In some versions it has a curved tip so that it resembles a pandita's hat. In Götsang Repa, he does wear a Pandita's hat, when he is taking leave from Milarepa and heading for central Tibet, but the colour is not mentioned and it was unlikely to be white as a pandita's hat is normally red or yellow.[103] There is also an elaborate form of the white conical hat, which has a large victory banner on its tip. Sometimes the hat is equipped with a fringe of bear hair at the front that hung in front of the eyes to protect them from the glare of the sun, although in that case, so that the eyes will still be visible, the fringe is represented as uselessly short, as if it is just a decoration.

That Rechungpa is an emanation of Vajrapaṇi, whose realm is Alakāvatī, is also evident in Yong-gé Mingyur's text:

Rechung Dorje Drakpa
I invite you to this place, I pray that you come
From the supreme place of Alakāvatī,
With an ocean of siddhas.[104]

Vajrapaṇi is literally 'a holder of a vajra' and is described as the holder of the Vajrayāna teachings. And as one of 'the Lords of the Three families', he embodies the power of all the Buddhas (while Mañjuśrī embodies their wisdom and Avalokiteśvara embodies their compassion). Therefore Rechungpa's identity with Vajrapaṇi is also made clear in this verse of praise:

I praise Rechung Dorje Drakpa,
The Vajra-mind of all the Buddhas,
Lord of power, holder of the vajra,
The holder of the treasury of the Vajrayāna.[105]

The fifteenth Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje (*mKha'-khyab rDo-rje,* 1870–1921) did not demur from this depiction of Rechungpa, for in the ancillary prayer he composed for the Karma Pakshi practice he wrote:

I pray to the one known as Dorje Drakpa,
Who is the essence of the mind-vajra of all the buddhas,
Who has a handsome form and the appearance of a cotton-clad yogin,
And spreads the songs of the profound Dharma into the ten directions.[106]

As Rechungpa pre-dates the *tulku* system, there was no series of Rechungpa incarnations that commenced with his death. The recently deceased Rechung Rinpoche *(Ras-chung Rin-po-che)* derived his title from the name of his monastery of Rechungpuk *(Ras-chung-phug).* I have heard tell of at least three people who have been identified as *trulpas* or *tulkus* of Rechungpa by the sixteenth Karmapa Rangjung Rigpay Dorje (*Rang-byung Rig-pa'i rDo-rje* 1924–81), including two Americans.

A specific *tulku* may also be indentified as a *trulpa,* or emanation, of Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa or Rechungpa. For example, the second Akong Rinpoche *(A-dkon Rin-po-che)* (born 1940), originally from Dolma Lhakang in east Tibet and now resident at the Kagyu Samye Ling Centre in Scotland, is regarded as being simultaneously an emanation of Bhaiṣajyaguru (Sangs-rgyas sMan-bla 'the Medicine Buddha') and of Rechungpa. The second Karsé Kongtrul (Kar-sras Kong-sprul) identified the first Akong as an emanation of Bhaiṣajyaguru because of his healing powers, while the ninth Trungpa Tulku *(Drung-pa sPrul-sku),* who was a holder of a lineage of Rechungpa's Karṇa-tantra, identified the first Akong as an emanation Rechungpa.

The seventh Yong-ge Mingyur Rinpoche (born 1976) has not only been recognised as Yong-ge Mingyur Rinpoche by the sixteenth Karmapa but also as Kangyur Rinpoche by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. He says that the first Yong-ge Mingyur Dorje, and therefore all subsequent rebirths, including himself, are considered to be rebirths of Rechungpa, primarily because of being identified as emanations of Vajrapani, and all Vajrapani

emanations can count Rechungpa as a previous life.[107] There are apparently many instances of lamas in Tibet who have been identified as emanations of Rechungpa, and a conclusive list of such emanations, if such is possible, is beyond this book.

However, Götsang Repa and Lhatsun Rinchen Namgyal portray the bodhisattva Vajrapāni, who resides in his realm of Alakāvatī, as being himself one of countless incarnations from the *Dharmakāya* Buddha. Both authors present this ultimate Buddha as a composite of the Nyingma and Kagyu versions of the ultimate Buddha: Samantabhadra-Vajradhara. This indicates that this passage post-dates the adoption of Nyingma practices in the Kagyu tradition by the early fourteenth century. Both authors list a succession of emanations of Samantrabhadra-Vajradhara that include buddhas in other worlds in past aeons which lead up to the birth of Rechungpa. In other words, the biography presents Rechungpa as someone who has *never* been an ordinary being, but is a manifestation of primordial Buddhahood appearing as an ordinary being solely in order to liberate others. This is specifically stated in a concluding prayer in Götsang Repa's text:

> Although you are a beginningless Buddha
> You accomplish compassionate activity until the end of existence[108]

Just before his death, or disappearance, Rechungpa alternates between stating that after his death he will be omnipresent with no particular location and predicting a number of specific incarnations in paradises or Buddha-realms—for example his vajra-mind will be incarnated in Alakāvatī, while his vajra-speech and vajra-body will appear as other beings elsewhere.[109] Thus his identity is, as would traditionally be stated, inconceivable.

Conclusion

Rechungpa is a unique figure in the history of hagiography, as the greatest development in his image occurred in the context of being a secondary character to his teacher Milarepa, and also implicitly to Gampopa, even though Rechungpa featured more strongly in the narrative. His character has undergone an evolution that in making him rebellious has actually added to his attractiveness, but has also resulted in a paradoxical figure where complete enlightenment is impossibly mixed with egoism and confusion. And what of the real person behind the stories? If the biography made during his lifetime—*The Essence of a Wonderful Jewel*—comes to light, it may well contain some surprises. Until then we have no choice but to try and see what lies behind centuries of inventive story-telling. There is little that we can be certain of. He was born near the Tibetan border in 1084, he probably became an orphan and was adopted by a peripatetic yogin, Milarepa, who brought him up and passed on his secret teachings to him. He went to Mithila in India to obtain more of the teachings of Nāropa's lineage, which were unavailable in Tibet. He lived for a while as a layman but the marriage failed and he returned to being a repa for the rest of his life, teaching in the southern borderlands of Loro and Jarpo. There he was reconciled with his ex-wife who became his pupil. Living until his late seventies, he had a great following and many successors, and his teachings are still being practised nearly 900 years after he obtained them in India.

NOTES

1
INTRODUCTION

1 *Mi-la'i rNam-thar.*
2 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum.*
3 *Ras-chung-pa'i rNam-thar.*
4 *rGod-tshangs Ras-pa.*
5 *Lus med mkha' 'gro' I chos skor dgu tillipa 'i gdams pa,* 1b–2a.
6 Derge Tengyur, Text 2337.
7 Ibid., Text 2338.
8 mKhan-chen 'Khra-'gu Rin-po-che. Pers. comm, Oxford, 27 September 2001.
9 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 440–1; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 384–5.
10 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 119–20 and 138–42, respectively, for examples of their biographies.
11 Prajñākaramati, Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā; Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel. sDe-dge'i bsTan-'gyur, dBu-ma, vol. La. 41b–288a.
12 Vairocanarakṣita, Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā; Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel. sDe-dge'i bsTan-'gyur, dBu-ma, vol. Sha. 95b–158b.
13 Vibhūticandra, Bodhicaryāvatāra-duravabodhana-nirṇaya-nāma-grantha; Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rtogs par dka'-ba'i gnas gtan la dbab pa zhes bya ba'i gzhung. sDe-dge'i bsTan-'gyur, dBu-ma, vol. Sha. 192b–285a.
14 Prajñākaramati, 107a–b; Vairocanarakṣita, 115b; Vibhūticandra, 226b.
15 Avatamsaka Sūtra, 159b.
16 sGam-po-pa, *Khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po dpal mnyam med sgam po pa 'gro mgon bsod names rin chen mchog gi gsung 'bum yid bzhin nor bu* (Kathmandu: Khenpo Tenzin and Lama Namgyal, 2000), 577–647.
17 Ibid., 646–7.

2
THE BIOGRAPHIES

1 According to Götsang Repa, in a passage that may come from Sum-pa′s work, Rechungpa died in 1171; in that case, the text would have been compiled twenty-four years after Rechungpa's death.
2 rGod-Tshang Ras-pa sNa-tshogs Rang-grol, *rJe-btsun ras-chung-ba'i rnam-thar* (Zi-ling: mtsho-sngon mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1992), 654–5.
3 Ibid., 530–58.
4 Ibid., 338–9 and 414.
5 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 596–601; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 519–23.
6 Tshe-dbang rGyal, 352.

7 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 352 ff.
8 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 472–89.
9 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 472–89.
10 *The Great Kagyu Masters,* xvi.
11 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 427–89.
12 Ibid., 431 gives the iron-ox year as his birth; 481 states that he died in his seventy-fifth year in a hare year, which would be a wood-hare year.
13 Ibid., 434.
14 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 427.
15 Ibid., 431.
16 Ibid., 481.
17 Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang: according to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa* (Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig.stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig tshogs.chung, 1996), 379.
18 Ibid., 473.
19 Ibid., 468.
20 Ibid., 470.
21 Ibid., 473–89.
22 Ibid., 472–3.
23 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 489–504.
24 Ibid., 489.
25 Ibid., 504.
26 That is 'thunder', which in Tibetan is Druk ('brug), the name of the lineage.
27 dPal dwags-po bka'-brgyud las/don-brgyud dpal-ldan dbyar-rnga-pa'i bstan-pa rin-po-cher byon-pa'i 'brug ra-lung gdan-rabs Chos-rje dBon-ras dang/rGod-tshangs-pa yan gong-ma grub-thob gser-ri'i 'phreng-ba'i rnam-par thar-pa mdor-tshang rags-bsdus le-tshan-rnams phyogs-bsgrigs bzhugs. Published as: rGyal-thang-pa bDe-chen rDo-rje (rGya-ldang-pa), *dKar-brgyud gSer-'phreng: A thirteenth-century collection of verse hagiographies of the succession of eminent masters of the 'Brug-pa dKarbrgyud-pa tradition* (H.P.: Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, 1973).
28 *Lho-rong Chos-'byung,* 630.
29 E.Gene Smith. Introduction to Mon-rtse-pa Kun-dga'-dpal-ldan, 6.
30 Pad-ma dKar-po, ''Gro ba'i mgon po gtsang pa rgya ras pa'i rnam par thar pa ng mtshar dad pa'i rlabs phreng' in Pad-ma dKar-po'i gSung 'bum, 24 vols (Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1973–4), vol. 3, 17a–17b.
31 rGya-ldang-pa, 189–265.
32 rGya-ldang-pa, 252.
33 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 362.
34 rGya-ldang-pa, preface.
35 Dan Martin, Tibetan Histories: A bibliography of Tibetan-language historical works (London: Serindia, 1997), 38.
36 rGya-ldang-pa, 564–5: rje'i zhal nas gsung pa dang/yum gyi ngag nas thos pa dang/ bdag gis gsung gleng zhus pa las/rang dgar bcug pa mi gdog pas/yon tan rnam thar bjod par mi nus kyang/slob ma mched grogs rnams kyi skul ba'i ngor/dpal ra lung dgon pa'i sa phyogs dben gnas su/shākya'i dge slong rin chen seng ge yis/legs sbyar
37 Ibid., 619. The lineage of these biographies: (1) rGyal-thang-pa bDe-chen rDo-rje. (2) Chos-rje Thogs-med-pa. (3) Slob-dpon Shes-rab 'Byung-gnas. (4) bKa'-bcu-pa Sangs-rgyas bKra-shis. (5) mKhas-grub Chos-kyi rGyal-mtshan. (6) And to myself, Svasti Dhvacha. Zur Legs-pa rGyal-mtshan.
38 E.Gene Smith, 'Preface' in rGya-ldang-pa.

39 rGya-ldang-pa, 13. The other colophons that mention mGon-po ′Od-zer have a simplified form of this descriptionó 'rich in the wealth of hearing, contemplation and meditation of scriptures, logic and practice instructions…' This occurs at the conclusion of the rnam-thars of Mar-pa (p. 187) Gampopa (p. 339) Phag-mo gru-pa (p. 435) gLing-ras-pa (p. 483) gTsang-pa rGya-ras (p. 525) and rGod-tshang-pa (pp. 618–19).

40 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 324–5; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 287–8.

41 Ibid., (Roerich) 329; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 292–3: ′Jam-dbyangs Śākya gzhon-nu succeeds ′Od-zer mGon-po as abbot of gSang-phu in a fire-tiger year, which must be 1266. ′Od-zer mGon-po of gSang-phu is also listed [(Roerich) 307; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 273] as one of the contemporaries of bSod-nams Rin-chen (1214–86), who became abbot of the bKa'-gdams-pa Kam-Kam monastery in 1254.

42 rGya-ldang-pa, 350: mid la'i lo rgyus kyi skabs ltar du gsungs.

43 rGya-ldang-pa, 380.

44 Ibid., 365.

45 *bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud Biographies: Reproduction of a collection of rare manuscripts from the stag-sna momastery in Ladakh* (Darjeeling: Kagyu Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1983), 373–401.

46 'rJe-btsun Ras-chung-pa'i lo-rgyus' in bDe-mchog sNyan-brgyud biographies: Reproduction of a collection of rare manuscripts from sTag-sna monastery (Darjeeling: Kagyu Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1983), 191–243.

47 Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen-dpal, *bKa'-brgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi 'Phreng-ba: A precious rosary of lives of the "Bri-gun-pa Dkar-brgyud-pa tradition* (Leh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1982), 718–29.

48 Ibid., 174–245.

49 Ibid., 400–634.

50 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 602–3; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 524–5.

51 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 717–50. O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dPal's biography appears here under the name Grub-chen Sangs-rgyas dPal.

52 NGMPP L5083, bKa'-brgyud gSer-phreng, 25a–31a.

53 *gSer-phreng Chen-mo,* 203–73.

54 *The Blue Annals,* (Roerich), 695; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 607.

55 Ibid., (Roerich), 695–6; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 607–8.

56 *bZhad-pai rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark): bzhad-pa. The TBRC ms uses the form *bzhad-pa'i* in it's title, and therefore that appears to be the original form, simplified in the Newark version. It is not common for a first name to end in a genitive particle and scribal corruptions tend towards more common forms.

57 Ibid., (Newark): mgul-chings; (Oxford and Stockholm): mgur-chings. ′Gur appears to be the original spelling, which is intermittently changed to mgur in both texts.

58 E.Gene Smith, preface to *The Life of the Saint of Gtsaṅ,* by Rgod-tshaṅ-ras-pa Sna-tshogs-raṅ-grol, ed. Lokesh Chandra, Sata-Piṭaka Series: Indo-Asian Literatures, vol. 79, (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1969), 17, n. 2.

59 *The Life of Milarepa,* trans. Lobsang P.Lhalungpa, xxx.

60 Ulrich Pagel, 'The British Library Tibetica: A Historical Survey' in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995,* ed. Helmut Krasser, Michael Torsten Much, Ernst Steinkellner, Helmut Tauscher (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 726.

61 Valrae Reynolds and Amy Heller, *Introduction to the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection* (Newark: The Newark Museum, 1983), 58.

62 Pers. comm., E.Gene Smith, Hiar Foundation, New York, December 1997.

63 Pers. comm., E.Gene Smith.

64 Pers. comm., Hakan Wahlquist, Senior Curator Asian Collections, Folkens Museum Etnografiska, Stockholm, February 1998.
65 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Stockholm), 276b. Shar dags *[sic]* po'i rnal 'byor pa gangs stod kyi ras chen guna matis/sham bu gangs dkar mo'i dben gnas su bsgrubs pa.
66 Ibid., (Newark) 243b; (Oxford) 191b; (Stockholm) 274b.
67 This is a Sanskrit translation of Ngan-ston's Tibetan name—Byang-chub rGyal-po 'King of Enlightenment'.
68 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Oxford), bsgom.
69 Ibid., (Newark) shad omitted.
70 Ibid., (Stockholm) rdzong.
71 Ibid., (Oxford) bodhe.
72 Ibid., (Oxford) ratsa.
73 Ibid., (Stockholm) 274b. The section—pa′i ras pa bu-chen bcu-gnyis kyi yig-ger—is unavailable.
74 Ibid., (Newark) 243b6–244a1; (Oxford) 192a1–2; (Stockholm) 275a3–4.
75 Ibid., (Stockholm) the four words *snyan rgyud bde mchog* are not available.
76 Ibid., (Newark) 'di.
77 Ibid., (Stockholm) brgyud.
78 Ibid., (Newark) 'khor lo.
79 Ibid., (Stockholm) 'dis.
80 Ibid., (Newark) 'ong.
81 *gdung-rgyud* normally refers to a hereditary lineage. Here we see *rgyud* without a ba-prefix clearly meaning a lineage.
82 Ibid., (Stockholm and Newark) brjed.
83 Ibid., (Newark) pa gsal ba'i phyir/
84 Ibid., (Newark) gsungs.
85 Ibid., (Newark) 162b6–163a5; (Oxford) 129a6–129b4; (Stockholm) 163b3–7.
86 Ibid., (Newark) 153a5–63a5; (Oxford) 124b6–129b4; (Stockholm) n.a-163b7.
87 Ibid., (Newark) 153b5; (Oxford) 125a3; (Stockholm) n.a.
88 *The Blue Annals,* (Roerich) 435; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 380.
89 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark) 163a1–4; (Oxford) 129b1–3; (Stockholm) 163b4–7.
90 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark) 163a2; (Oxford) 129b1; (Stockholm) 163b5.
91 I assume that the quotation has not yet begun at this point, because of the honorific *gnang,* while the quotation uses the familiar *byas* that is used in first-person speech.
92 *ras chod.* The meaning is obscure, but it occurs elsewhere. Perhaps it is an idiomatic phrase referring to betraying the values of a *ras-pa.*
93 thod rgal nyams kyi skyugs pa ′di/yi ger bkod pa mi rigs kyang/bdag nyid brjed pa′i ′jigs pa dang/ma ′ongs gdung rgyud ′dzin pa rnams/mos shing spro ba bskyed pa′i phyir/bla ma′i gsung bzhin yi ger bris/lan gsum bar du zhu phul nas/dgyes bzhin gnang ba ma lags pa/mkha′ ′gros ko long sdom pa′i phyir/gzu lum ras chod ngas ma byas/slad nas ′byon pa′i bsgom chen la/dmar khrid nyams tshad ma byas par/dpe rgyud yi ge ma bstan gsungs/bla ma rje′i bka′ rgyas btab/gal te bka′ las ′das gyur na/mkha′ ′gro′i bka′ chad byung ba′i phyir/yi ge mi spel sba bar zhu/
94 (Newark) 243b3–4; (Oxford) 192b5–6; (Stockholm) 24b7–275a1.
95 While the Newark and Stockholm editions both have Nyengom Repa (with variation in spelling) the Oxford version has Radza Repa.
96 Ibid., (Newark) 244a1–3; (Oxford) 192a2–3; (Stockholm) 274b-275a1.
97 gTsang-smyon, *bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud,* vol. 1, 195; vol. 2, 171.
98 *bKa'-brgyud mGur-mtsho* (Rumtek, Sikkim: Rumtek monastery, n.d.), 72a2–101a3; *The Rain of Wisdom,* trans. Nālandā Translation Committee (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 1980) 165–217.

99 Rang-byung rDo-rje, “rNal-‘byor gyi dbang-phyug mi-la bzhad-pa rdo-rje’i gsung-mgur mdzod-nag-ma zhes-pa karma-pa rang-byung rdo-rje phyogs cig tu bkod-pa” in Karmapa Rang-byung rDo-rje’i gSung-’bum, Vol. Ga (Ziling: Tshur-phu mKhan-po Lo-yag bKra-shis, 2006), 770.
100 Tshal-pa Kun-dga′ rDo-rje, *Deb-ther dmar-po,* ed. Dung-dkar bLo-bzang ′Phrin-las kyis mchan-′grel bkod (China: Mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1981).
101 For a brief description of his life, see *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), vi–vii.
102 Bu-ston Rin-chenñgrub, History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung), trans. E.Obermiller (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1931–2).
103 Its actual title is *sNgon gyi gtam Me-tog Phreng-ba* and it is contained in *Rare Tibetan Historical and Literary Texts from the Library of Tsepon W.D.Shakabpa,* ed. T.Tsepal Taikhang (New Delhi: T.Tsepal Taikhang, 1974), 60–165.
104 *lHo-rong Chos-’byung,* 230.
105 Lho-rong Chos-‘byung, 229.
106 ’Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dPal *The Blue Annals,* trans. George N.Roerich (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1949), 668. The English translation is faulty here; the sentence that he was in his twenty-ninth year in the earth-bird year of 1184 is in fact specifying the time when gTsang-pa rGya-ras discovered the *Ro-snyoms sKor-drug.* ’Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dPal, *The Blue Annals* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1974), 583.
107 Pers. comm., Karma Seng-ge Rinpoche, Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 2005.
108 Chögyam is the abbreviation of Chökyi Gyamtso *(Chos-kyi rGya-mthso)* ‘Cocean of the Dharma’.
109 Tsang Nyön Heruka, trans. Nālandā Transklayion Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa, *The Life of Marpa the Translator* (Boulder, CO: Prajñā Press, 1982), 90, n.
110 E.Gene Smith, Introduction to Mon-rtse-pa Kun-dga’-dpal-ldan, *Dkar brgyud gser ‘phreng* (Leh: Sonam W.Tashigang, 1970), 4.
111 Personal information from Larry Merlmelstein, Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 2002.
112 Personal information from Larry Merlmelstein, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 2004.
113 The Collected Writings (gSung-′bum) of the Second Zhvadmar Mkha′Spyod Dbang Po (mKha’-spyod dBang-po gSung-’bum), 4 vols (Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten, 1978), vol. Ka, 187–317(162a–266a).
114 dPal-byor bZang-po, *rGya-bod Yig-tshang Chen-mo* (Szechwan: Si-khron Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1985), ngo-sprod (introduction), 1.
115 Ibid., 526–7.
116 rTa-tshag Tshe-dbang rGyal, lHo-rong Chos-′byung (Bod-ljongs Bod-yig dPe-rnying dPe-skrun-khang, 1994), 108–13.
117 Ibid., 113–59.
118 Ibid., 108; Zhwa-dmar-pa, 237.
119 Ibid., 844.
120 *lHo-rong Chos-’byung,* 845. Me pho stag gi lo la bka’ brgyud rin po che’i lo rgyus rnyed tshad phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa rang gzhan dad pa’i gsol ‘debs ni rab byung zhes pa’i lo zla ba dang po’i yar tshes la legs par ‘grub pa yin/…Chos ‘byung thub bstan gsal byed ‘di nyid lug lo hor zla lnga pa’i dmar phyogs gsum pa’i ‘phrul ‘khor la zhus shing dag par grub pa’o/
121 Mon-rtse Kun-dga’ dPal-ldan (1408–75). *rJe-btsun Ras-chung rDo-rje Grags- kyi rnam-par-thar-pa,* in *Dkar-brgyud Gser-phreng: A Golden Rosary of lives of Eminent Gurus,* Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod, vol. 3 (Leh: Sonam W.Tashigang, 1970), 165–87.
122 ′Brug-chen II, Kun-dga’ dPal-’byor, *Collected Works (Gsung ‘Bum) of Rgyal-dbang Rje Kun-dga’-dpal (rGyal-dbang rJe Kun-dga’ dPal-’byor gyi bKa’-’bum),* 2 vols (Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1982).
123 *The Blue Annals,* (Roerich), 436–40; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 381–4.
124 Ibid., (Roerich), 440–51; (′Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 384–93.

125 Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, compiled by Khetsun Sangpo (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1977), vol. 7, 33–47.
126 In the available edition, the sub-title occurs only in the colophon.
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132 Written in a shortened form *(bdsud-yig)* as *rdeo'i.*
133 Written as a numeral.
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137 gTsang-smyon, *bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud,* vol. 1, 195; vol. 2, 171.
138 *Byin-brlabs kyi chu-rgyun,* vol. 2, p. 553, f. 537a5–6.
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52 Other variants: Tillopa, Tillipa, Tellipa, Telopa. Fabrizio Torricelli, 'A Thirteenth Century Tibetan Hymn to the Siddha Tilopa,' *The Tibet Journal,* vol. XXIII (Spring 1998), 3.

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54 sGam-po-pa bSod-nams Rin-chen, 'rJe Mar-pa dang rje-btsun mi-la'i rnam-thar' in *Selected Writings of sGam-po-pa bSod-nams Rin-chen (Dwags-po Lha-rje), with the biography written by his descendant bSod-nams Lhun-grub* (Dolanji, H.P.: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1974), 18–30. *The Collected Works (gSung-'bum) of sGampo-pa bSod-nams Rin-chen,* ed. Khasdub Gyatsho Shashin (Delhi: 1975), vol. 1, 16–26. Prepared from a manuscript in bKra-shis rDzong monastery in Lahul. *The Collected Works (gSung-'bum) of sGam-po-pa bSod-nams Rin-chen,* ed. sPyan-snga bSod-nams Lhun-grub (Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, February 1982), vol. 1, 23–42. Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen-dpal, *bKa' rbgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi 'Phreng-ba,* Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod (Leh: S.W.Tashigangpa, 1972) vol. 38, 718–29. SGam-po-pa, *Dwags-po 'I bKa'—'bum, 25–46. Selected Writings of sGam-po pa: The Gemur Manuscript,* 18–30.
55 lHa-rje bSod-nams Rin-chen, *Dam-chos Yid-bzhin Nor-bu Thar-pa Rin-po-che'i rGyan* (China: Si-khron Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1990).
56 *Selected Writings of sGam-po-pa: The Gemur Manuscript,* 21.
57 Ibid., 22.
58 Ibid., 22.
59 Ibid., 22.
60 Ibid., 25.
61 Ibid., 30.
62 Ibid., 22.
63 Ibid., 23.
64 Ibid., 25.
65 Ibid., 26.
66 Ibid., 27.
67 Ibid., 29.
68 Ibid., 19.
69 Hubert Decleer, 19, 27.
70 Karma Nges-don bsTan-rgyas, *Chos-rje Karma-pa sku-'phreng rin-byon gyi rnamthar mdor-bsus dpag-bsam khri-shing* (Bir, H.P.: D.Tsondu Senghe, 1976) 13–14.
71 Roerich, 414–15.
72 Ibid., 735.
73 Sde-dge bStan-'gyur, rGyud-sde Zhi, 246b–7b.
74 René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u Verglagsanstalt, 1975), 493–4.
75 Collected Works of Bla-ma Zhang (Dan Martin ms.) Vol. Ka. Telopa: 45a; Nāropa: 47b; Mar-pa: 56b; Mi-la Ras-pa: 59b; Dags-po lha-rje: 65b; Dags-po bsgom-pa (sgomtshul): 71a; rGwa-lo: 76a; bLa-ma bShen-pa: 94b; Yer-ba-pa: 104a; Bhe-ro-pa: 123b. An edition was published in India: *Writings (Bka' 'Thor bu) of Zhang g.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa.* Reproduced from the library of Burmiok Athing by Khamssprul Don-brgyud Nyi-ma (Tashijong, Palampur, H.P.: The Sungrab Nyamso Gyunpel Parkhang Tibetan Craft Community, 1972). However it is extremely corrupt, the order of the source pages having been confused in transcription, so that in mid-sentence the narrative leaps ahead, to return to the postponed material later. The error is confirmed by a comparison with the sGam-po-pa text on which it is based and by the manuscript in the collection of Dan Martin.
76 Bla-ma Zhang gYu-bra-pa brTson-'grus Grags-pa, 'Mi-la Ras-pa'i rnam-thar' in *mDzad-pa rnam-thar gyi skor,* 59b–65b.
77 Ibid., 60a3: bsten.

78 Bla-ma Zhang, 'Bla-ma Dags-po lHa-rje'i rNam-thar' *mDzad-pa rnam-thar gyi skor,* 70a. His criticisms are included in the Dakpo Nyengyu section of Appendix One.
79 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 183.
80 Ibid., 185.
81 Ibid., 199.
82 See Appendix 6.
83 rGya-ldang-pa, 203.
84 Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dpal, *bKa- rbgyud Yid-bzhin Nor-bu yi 'Phreng-ba* (Leh: S.W.Tashigangpa, 1972), 177.
85 Ibid., 178.
86 de Jong, 27; Lhalungpa, 13.
87 rGya-ldang-pa, 194.
88 Ibid., 195.
89 Ibid., 197.
90 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 214–15. chos nyid bden pa mthar thug pa gzigs shing mngon du gyur pa sprul-pa'i sku yin.
91 Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dpal, 174.
92 Five stages of the generation of the visualisation of a deity, that correspond to the purification of five aspects of conception and birth.
93 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros mTha'-yas, *rJe-btsun ras-pa chen-po la brten-pa'i bla-ma'i rnal- 'byor gyi zin-bris ye-shes gsal-byed,* 13a.
94 Phrin-las rGya-mtsho, *Grub-pa'i gnas-chen brag-dkar rta-so'i gnas dang gnas-rab bla-ma brgyud-pa'i lo-rgyus mdo-tsam brjod-pa mos-ldan dad-pa'i gdung-sel drang-srong dga'-ba'i dal-gtam,* 10a–11b.
95 Pad-ma dKar-po, 498.
96 Phrin-las rGya-mtsho.
97 Roerich, 433.
98 Pema Karpo, 478.
99 Phrin-las rGya-mtsho, 13a.
100 *dPal bZhad-pa rDo-rje'i rNam-thar mGur-mching dang bcas-pa* (Newark ms.), 153b5; (Oxford ms.), 125a3; (Stockholm xylograph), n.a.; *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 337, 269.
101 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 215.
102 rGya-ldang-pa, 198.
103 Ibid., 260.
104 Zhwa-dmar-pa, 309.
105 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 235b.
106 *Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* 8.
107 Ibid., 532.
108 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 72.
109 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 1062.
110 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 100.
111 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 427, 436; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 371, 381.
112 Kaḥ-thog Tshe-dbang Nor-bu, *Selected Writings of Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang Nor-bu,* 692.
113 Ibid., 694.
114 bSod-nams Tshe-ring, *mNyam-med sGam-po-ba'i rNam-thar* (mTsho-sngon Mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1994), 181.
115 Phrin-las rGya-mtsho, 12b.
116 Ibid., 20a.

4
RECHUNGPA'S CHILDHOOD AND MEETING MILAREPA

1 Chan, 924.
2 Gyurme Dorje, 376.
3 Ibid., 924.
4 Kaḥ thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang Nor-bu, *Bod-rje lHa-btsad-po'i gDung-rabs mNga'-ris-smad Gung-thang du Ji-ltar-byung-ba'i Tshul: Deb-ther Dwangs-shel 'Phrul-gyi Me-long in Bod kyi Lo-rgyus Deb-ther Khag-lnga,* ed. Chab-spel Tshe-brtan Phun-tshogs, vol. 9 of *Gangs-can Rigs-mdzod* (Bod-ljongs Bod-yig dPe-rnying dPe-skrun-khang, 1990), 92.
5 Ibid., 93.
6 Ibid., 929.
7 Chang, 108.
8 Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mKhan.chen Ngag.dbang Grags.pa* (Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang, 1996), 148.
9 Mon-rtse-pa, 165.
10 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 108. khab gung thang 'phrang gi ra ba.
11 Ibid., 125.
12 Pad-ma dKar-po, 499.
13 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 9.
14 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 9 'gung thang pad ma dkar po'i grong phreng ra zhes bya bar…'
15 dPa'-bo gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, 377. 'mang yul gung thang gi pad ma dkar po'i grong phreng ra'.
16 Mon-rtse-pa, 167.
17 Byang-chub bZang-po, 126.
18 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark) 37b; (Oxford) 29b; (Stockholm) na.
19 *Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* 212; Zhwa-dmar-pa, 237; rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 192.
20 rGya-ldang-pa, 386.
21 Pad-ma dKar-po, 501.
22 Roerich, 436.
23 Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts,* 41, 48, 78; Preface to *The Life of the Saint of gTsang,* 30.
24 http://www.tbrc.org/.
25 Roerich, 440; 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba, 384.
26 rGya-ldang-pa, 354.
27 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 70a; (Oxford), 54b; (Stockholm), n.a.
28 Roerich, 439; 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba, 384.
29 Ibid., 436. Roerich incorrectly gives 1083 for the wood-rat year, an error reproduced by E.Gene Smith in rGod-tshang Ras-pa, *The Life of the Saint of gTsang,* Preface, 30.
30 Ibid., 439.
31 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 9; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 11.
32 lHa-btsun, 829; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 646.
33 Śākya Rin-chen, 192.
34 Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang Nor-bu, *Selected Writings of Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang Nor-bu,* 697–8.
35 dPal-'byor bZang-po, 521.
36 Śākya Rin-chen. 191.
37 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 215.
38 *Deb-ther dMar-po,* 87.
39 sTag-lung nGag-dbang rNam-rgyal, 218.
40 *A River of Blessing,* 551.

41 Padma dKar-po, 494.
42 Ibid., 499.
43 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 16.
44 rDo-rje mDzes-’od, 11.
45 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 12.
46 De Jong, 23.
47 Ibid., 192.
48 Roerich, 948.
49 Ibid., 568.
50 Ibid., 235.
51 Gyurme Dorje, 264.
52 rDo-rje mDzes-‘od, 193.
53 ‘Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 9.
54 *Rwa-lung gSer-’phreng,* (Palampur) 211.
55 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 9.
56 Ibid., 11.
57 rGya-ldang-pa, 343.
58 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 3–6.
59 lHa-btsun, 485–93.
60 rGya-ldang-pa, 348.
61 Brod-phug.
62 sNya-nam.
63 Ral-pa.
64 Mon-rtse-pa, 168.
65 rGod-tshang Ras-pa (mTsho-sngon), 53; (Manali) 29a.
66 dGa’-bde rGyal-mtshan, 65; *Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* vol. 1, 332.
67 *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 37b. (Oxford), 29b. (Stockholm), missing.
68 *Dag-yig gSra-bsgrigs,* 353.
69 Ibid., 375. chung ngu pha ma shi ba’i byis pa.
70 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 1311.
71 mKhan-chen Khra-‘gu, Pers. comm., 10 September 2000.
72 Charles Ramble, Pers. comm., 2 March 2001.
73 rGya-ldang-pa, 342.
74 Roerich, 436.
75 gTsang-smyon, *bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud,* vol. 1. 93; vol. 2, 170; *idem, Mi-la’i mGur-‘bum,* 90.
76 lHa-btsun, 492.
77 Sangs-rgyas Dar-po, 74b.
78 Byang-chub bZang-po. 125.
79 ‘Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 9.
80 *NGMPP bKa’-brgyud rNam-thar,* 25b; *Rwa-lung gSer-’phreng,* (Palampur), 211.
81 rGod-thang Ras-pa, *Ras-chung-ba’i rNam-thar* (Quinghai), 11.
82 dPa-bo gTsug-la ‘phreng-ba, 377.
83 rDo-rje mDzes-‘od, 194.
84 rGya-ldang-pa, 342–4.
85 *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 37b1–38a6; (Oxford), 29b7–31b7; (Stockholm), n.a.
86 *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 37b3–4; (Oxford), 29b7–30a2; (Stockholm), n.a. The present unavailability of this section of the Stockholm text makes the selection for a critical edition uncertain.
87 rDo-rje mDzes-‘od, 192–3.
88 mKha’-spyod dBang-po, 237.

89 rGya-ldang-pa, 342–3.
90 NGMPP *bKa'-brgyud rNam-thar,* 25a–25b.
91 Mon-rtse-pa, 165.
92 Kun-dga' dPal-'byor, 499.
93 *The Blue Annals,* (Roerich) 436; ('Gos Lotsāba), 381.
94 rGya-ldang-pa, 343.
95 gTsang-smyon, *Mi-la'i rNam-thar,* (de Jong), 154; (lHa-lung-pa), 144.
96 gTsang-smyon, *bDe-mchog mKha'-'gro sNyan-rgyud,* vol. 1. 93–5; vol. 2, 169–71. See Appendix 11.
97 Ibid., 93–4; 169–70.
98 'Jam-dbyangs Grags-pa, 9–10.
99 Sangs-rgyas Dar-po, 74b–75a.
100 lHa-btsun, 493–5.
101 Ibid., 833.
102 Ibid., 493–4.
103 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 11. DKa'-ba spyod cing sdug bsngal gyi bden pa gzigs pas/ nges 'byung drag pos bla ma dang mjal zhing bstan pa mchog la bzhugs tshul.
104 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 11–12.
105 Ibid., 13–14.
106 dPa'-bo gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, 377.
107 Pad-ma dKar-po, 493.
108 Ibid., 499–500.
109 sTag-lung Thang-pa, 210–11.
110 Śākya Rin-chen, 192–3.

5
RECHUNGPA'S STRANGE ILLNESS AND CURE

1 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 194.
2 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 37b–42a; (Oxford), 29b7–31b7; (Stockholm), n.a.
3 Ibid., (Newark), 42a–46b; (Oxford), 31b7–33b6; (Stockholm), n.a.
4 Ibid., (Newark), 46b–59b; (Oxford), 33b6–46b7; (Stockholm), n.a.
5 Ibid., (Newark), 59b–65a6; (Oxford), 46b7–50b6; (Stockholm), n.a.
6 Ibid., (Newark), 65a6–73a5; (Oxford), 50b6–56b2; (Stockholm), n.a.
7 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 654–5.
8 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 1354.
9 Ibid., 2337.
10 Monier-Williams, 297.
11 Ibid., 313.
12 Ibid., 1106.
13 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 422.
14 Ibid., 1648.
15 Ibid., 2851.
16 Ibid., 812.
17 *Deb-ther sNgon-po* (Roerich), 597; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 520.
18 Ibid., (Roerich), 986; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 874.
19 Derge bsTang'yur, texts 480, 1635, 1636, 1826, 1840, 3769, 4712.
20 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 5–6.

21 C.P.N.Sinha, *Mithila under the Karnatas: c., 1097–1325 A.D.* (Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979), 4.
22 J.C.Jha, *Migration and Achievements of Maithila Paṇḍitas: The Migrant* Scholars of *Mithila, 800–1947 AD* (Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1991), 2.
23 Ibid., 4.
24 C.P.N.Sinha, 3.
25 Makhan Jha, *Civilizational Regions of Mithila and Mahakoshal* (Delhi: Capital Publishing House, 1982), 181.
26 C.P.N.Sinha, 49.
27 Ibid., 3.
28 *Biography of Dharmasvāmin* (Roerich), 57–60, 98–100; (Zongtse), 28–40, 166–78.
29 Ibid., (Roerich), 63–97; (Zongtse), 40–166.
30 R.K.Choudhari, 110.
31 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 8, 57; (Zongtse) 32/33.
32 Ibid., (Roerich), 10, 61; (Zongtse) 40/41.
33 Ibid., (Roerich) 11, 63; (Zongtse) 46/7.
34 Ibid., (Roerich) 110.
35 Monier-Williams, 579, col. 3, for *paṭṭa*, cf. Paṭṭanivasana.
36 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 383.
37 rGya-ldang-pa, 189–263.
38 Ibid., 343–8.
39 Ibid., 344.
40 Ibid., 344–5: tsi-tsi dzwa-la; *bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud Biographies,* 194: *tsi-ti dzo-la*.
41 *gSo-ba rig-pa'i tshig-mdzod g.yu-thog dgongs-rgyan,* ed. dBang'dus (China: mi-rigs dpe-skrun khang, 1982), 510.
42 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 2218.
43 Monier-Williams, 724.
44 rGya-ldang-pa, (a scribal error here leaves out *ḍa* 345; *Biographies,* 195.
45 A classic shaman device still used by the Lha-mo and dPa'-bo of Nepal and Ladakh. Hubert Decleer (Personal information, 2004).
46 rGya-ldang-pa, 346; *Biographies,* 197.
47 *Five Hundred Buddhist Deities; Senri Ethnological Reports 2,* compiled by Musashi Tachikawa, Masahide Mori, Shinobu Yamauchi (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1995), 199.
48 NGMPP *bKa'-brgyud rNam-thar,* 22b–23a.
49 *Rwa-lung gSer-phreng,* 211–12.
50 bDe-mchog sNyan-rgyud Biographies, 191–243.
51 lHo-rong, 108–9.
52 rGya-ldang-pa, 345.
53 Ibid., 344.
54 Mon-rtse-pa, 166.
55 Byang-chub bZang-po, 126.
56 Mon-rtse-pa, 166–7.
57 Byang-chub bZang-po, vol. 1, 125–50.
58 Mon-rtse-pa, 165.
59 Byang-chub bZang-po, vol. 1, 125.
60 Ibid., 125.
61 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 109.
62 Byang-chub bZang-po, 126.
63 Ibid., 126.
64 Charles Ramble, Pers. comm., 2 March 2001.

65 Kaḥ-thog Tshe-dbang Nor-bu, *Selected Writings of Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang Nor-bu,* 697.
66 These two enquiries are merged into one in the translation by Garma C.C.Chang.
67 Chang mistranslates *phru-rlog du bcug* (91) 'made to plough', as 'sent him a pot on which a curse had been placed' (Chang, 199).
68 gTsang-smyon, *Mi-la mGur-'bum,* 93.
69 Ibid., 95.
70 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 194.
71 lHa-btsun, 494. De ring 'bul rgyu med phyis mjal du yong.
72 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 10. The *rna* is most likely a scribal corruption of *hu,* which is similar in the *dbu-med* script.
73 See Appendix 13.
74 rGod-tshang Ras-pa sNa-tshogs Rang-grol, *The Life of the Saint of gTsang* (gTsang-smyon he-ru-ka phyogs thams-cad las rnam-par-rgyal-ba'i rnam-thar rdo-rje theg-pa'i gsal-byed nyi-ma'i snying-po), ed. Lokesh Chandra, Śata-piṭaka Series: Indo-Asian Literatures, vol. 79, (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1969).
75 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 666.
76 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, *Rechungpa'i rNam-thar,* 15.
77 Mon-rtse-pa 166. This is not the only example of 'g' written for 'k'.
78 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 17.
79 *Mi-la'i mGur- 'bum,* 312–13.
80 Mon-rtse-pa, 166.
81 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 18.
82 rGya-ldang-pa, 344.
83 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 21.
84 Ibid., 23.
85 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 10.
86 rGya-ldang-pa, 345.
87 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 35.
88 *The Blue Annals,* (Roerich) 668; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 583. The English translation is faulty and does not tie in the date with the discovery.
89 rGya-ldang-pa, 346.
90 Mon-rtse-pa, 166.
91 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 36–41.
92 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 437; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 382.
93 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 110.
94 Byang-chub bZang-po, 129.
95 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 843; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 746.
96 Decleer, Hubert. 'The Melodious Drum Sound All-Pervading', in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Narita 1989* (Tokyo: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), vol. 1, 27.
97 Ibid., 27.
98 rGya-ldang-pa, 366.
99 Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge, 210–13.
100 *Lho-rong Chos-'byung,* 155.
101 Cyrus Stearns, Luminous Lives: The story of the early masters of the lam 'bras tradition in Tibet (Boston, MA: Wisdom, 2001), 47–55.
102 Pad-ma dKar-po, 502.
103 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 227; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 203.
104 Ibid., (Roerich), 842; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 745.
105 *Selected Writings of sGam-po-pa: The Gemur Manuscript,* 22.

106 sGam-po-pa, *Dwags-po'i bKa'- 'bum,* vol. 1, 606.
107 Ibid., 602.
108 gTsug-lag 'phreng-ba, 377–8. Yang ma khus sa gnyan du ma brkor bcug pas bsnyung mdze byung/dzo gi ri bo rtse lnga la 'gro ba zhig gis skyel mi la sbyar te rgya gar du btol/bla ma wa la tsaṇḍas gtum po khyung sham can gnang ste zla ba gsum bsgrubs pas dang por snyung du song yang mthar rtags khyad par can byung/nad gdon yul 'bud/
109 Pad-ma dKar-po, 494.
110 Ibid., 500.
111 Śākya Rin-chen, 196.
112 rGod-tshang ras-pa, 28; dGa'-bde rGyal-mtshan, 35.

6
SORCERY, LOGIC AND ANGRY MONKS

1 rGya-ldang-pa, 348–9.
2 Ibid., 349–50.
3 Ibid., 245–9.
4 sGam-po-pa, 24; Bla-ma Zhang, 62a.
5 rGya-ldang-pa, 245–8.
6 Ibid., 248–9.
7 Ibid., 249–51.
8 Ibid., 350.
9 *Yid-bzhin Nor-bu,* 228–31.
10 Ibid., 229, bsgom ste sangs rgyas mi tsol bar/*thos pa ches pas ci* la phan.
11 Ibid., 229–31.
12 Ibid., 231–3.
13 Ibid., 230–1.
14 rGya-ldang-pa, 350: thos chung rtsod pa 'pham pa dang/ces pa nas/ras chung mi [*sic.* ma] 'dug rgya gar song/ces pa'i bar mid la'i lo rgyus kyi skabs ltar du gsungs.
15 *Yid-bzhin Nor-bu,* 231, line 3.
16 *Yid-bzhin Nor-bu,* 233.
17 NGMPP 26a–b.
18 Ibid., 26b.
19 Ibid., 228; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 59b; (Oxford), 46b; (Stockholm), n.a.
20 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 59b–65a; (Oxford), 46b–50b; (Stockholm), n.a.
21 Ibid., (Newark), 60a: der ston pa rnams bka' gdams pa yin pas chags sdang byas nas... (Oxford), 47a: der ston pa ka *[sic]* gdams pa yin bas chags sdang byas te; (Stockholm), n.a.
22 Ibid., (Newark): tum; (Oxford): dum; (Stockholm), n.a.
23 Ibid., (Newark), 65b; (Oxford), 49b; (Stockholm), n.a.
24 Ibid., (Newark), 63a6 to 63b4; (Oxford), 49a–49b; (Stockholm), n.a.
25 Ibid., (Newark), 63b6; (Oxford), 49b; (Stockholm), n.a.
26 Ibid., (Newark), 65a5; (Oxford), 50b; (Stockholm), n.a.
27 Ibid., (Newark), 65a1; (Oxford), 50b; (Stockholm), n.a.
28 Ibid., (Newark), 65b5; (Oxford), 51a; (Stockholm), n.a.
29 Ibid., (Newark), 65b, 66a; (Oxford), 51a; (Stockholm), n.a.
30 Ibid., (Newark), 65b5–66a3; (Oxford), 51a; (Stockholm), n.a.
31 rGya-ldang-pa, 350; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 66a4–66a6; (Oxford), 51a–51b; (Stockholm), n.a.
32 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 66b; (Oxford), 50b; (Stockholm), n.a.

33 Zhwa-dmar, 285.
34 Ibid., 243–4.
35 Ibid., 285.
36 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 87.
37 Ibid., 87.
38 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 437; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 382.
39 Mon-rtse-pa, 167.
40 Ibid., 168.
41 rGya-ldang-pa., 350.
42 *Byin-rlabs Chu-rgyun,* 312–37.
43 Ibid., 301–12.
44 Ibid., 304. The term used for sweet-buckwheat is *rgya-ri,* which also appears as *rgya-bra/rgya-'bras* in modern Tibetan. Charles Ramble, Pers. comm., 2 March 2001. mKhan-chen Khra-'gu believes it may be Manangi dialect for millet., Pers. comm., August 1998.
45 Ibid., 305–6.
46 Ibid., 309.
47 Ibid., 336–7.
48 Ibid., 332.
49 *Mi-la'i mGur- 'bum,* 351–82.
50 rGya-ldang-pa, 244.
51 Ibid., 246, line 4.
52 *Mi-la'i mGur- 'bum,* 360.
53 Chang, 382.
54 lHa-btsun, 500.
55 Ibid., 500.
56 *Mi-la'i mgur-'bum,* 380–1.
57 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 55–62.
58 *Mi-la'i mgur-'bum,* 362.
59 'Jams-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 11.
60 Byang-chub bZang-po, 127–8.
61 Ibid., 114–15.
62 gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, 378; Pad-ma dKar-po, 502.
63 Śākya Rin-chen, 201–3.
64 Ibid., 202 lines 1–2.
65 Newark: tsa na.
66 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 65b1; (Oxford), 50b; (Stockholm), n.a.
67 Śākya Rin-chen., 202.
68 Ibid., 202–3.
69 Ibid., 166.
70 *gSer-phreng Chen-mo,* 248–50.
71 Ibid., 251.
72 Ibid., 251–3.
73 Ibid., 253.
74 Ibid., 256.

7
THE TEACHINGS OF A BODILESS ḌĀKINĪ

1 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 268.
2 sGam-po-pa, 22.
3 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 2a; (Oxford), 2a; (Stockholm), 1b; Zhwa-dmar, 188; 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, *rJe-btsun ras-pa chen-po la brien-pa'i rnal-'byor gyi zin-bris ye-shes gsal-byed,* (publisher unknown), 13a.
4 Hubert Deeleer, Pers. comm., Febrary 2004.
5 Regmi, 153.
6 Turrell Wylie, *A Tibetan Religious Geography of Nepal* Serie Orientale Roma 42 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 13 n. 10.
7 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 261.
8 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 96b5; (Oxford), 74a2: (Stockholm), n.a.
9 *Byin-rlabs gyi Chu-rgyun,* 449.
10 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 268.
11 Ibid., 268; Petech, 187.
12 Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval history of Nepal 750–1480,* Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 10, Materials for the Study of Nepalese History, vol. 3 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il medio de estremo oriente, 1958), 55.
13 D.R.Regmi. *Medieval Nepal,* vol. 1, *Early Medieval Period 750–1530 A.D.* (Calcutta: Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, 1965), 161.
14 Regmi, 56.
15 Petech, 55.
16 Regmi, 164.
17 Petech, 57.
18 Regmi, 159.
19 Petech, 56.
20 Regmi, 159.
21 Petech, 57, n. 8.
22 Regmi, 160.
23 Ibid., 163.
24 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 95b–7b; (Oxford), 74a1–74a3; (Stockholm), n.a.
25 *Yid-bzhin Nor-bu,* 225–6.
26 *gSer-phreng Chen-mo,* 244–5.
27 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 67b1–67b6; (Oxford), 51a6–51b4; (Stockholm), 90b4–90b6.
28 *Byin-brlab kyi Chu-rgyun,* 449–51.
29 gTsang-smyon, *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 261–4.
30 Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge, 247.
31 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 67b1–67b6; (Oxford), 51a6–51b4; (Stockholm), 90b4–90b6. *Byin-rlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* 449–51; *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 261–4.
32 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 220–7; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 197–203.
33 Ibid., (Roerich), 360; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 319.
34 Dege Canon, 4605.
35 Derge Canon, 1746.
36 Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge, 168.
37 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 846, 859.

38 Derge Canon, 4892.
39 rGya-ldang-pa, 352–3.
40 Ibid., 353–4.
41 Ibid., 642.
42 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 843; (‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 746.
43 Ibid., (Roerich), 857; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 757.
44 Ibid., (Roerich), 851; (‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 753.
45 Decleer, H. ‘The Sacred Biography of Bharo “Maimed Hand”’ in *Buddha Jayanti Souvenir,* eds R.Shakya and M.Shakya (Lalitpur: 2538th Buddha Jayanti Organising Committee, 1994).
46 Ibid., (Roerich), 396; (‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 348.
47 Ibid., (Roerich), 843; (‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 747.
48 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 268.
49 Ibid., 354.
50 Ibid., 355.
51 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 221, 225; (‘Gos Lotsāba), 198, 201.
52 rGya-ldang-pa, 355–6.
53 Ibid., 356.
54 Ibid., 356–7.
55 NGMPP, 26b; *Rwa-lung gSer-phreng,* 213.
56 Lo Bue, 645.
57 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 227; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 203.
58 Ibid., (Roerich), 383–4; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 336–40.
59 Ibid., 26b–27a.
60 Rwa-lung gSer-phreng, 213: Written as *Arulavajra.*
61 NGMPP, 27a: Written as *Amukavajra.*
62 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 1042.
63 Derge Canon, 564, 682, 901, 988, 1314, 1476, 1737, 2725, 2899, 3131, 3308, 3310, 3321, 3329–99, 3673, 4735, 4879, 4882, 4885, 4975.
64 Ibid., 4625.
65 Ibid., 3738.
66 Ibid., 1986.
67 Ibid., 1745–6.
68 Ibid., (Roerich), 843; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 746.
69 Derge Canon, texts 1933, 3876, 3978.
70 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 325; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 288.
71 Derge Canon, text 1403.
72 *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar,* 67a6; (Oxford), 52a; (Stockholm), n.a.
73 Mon-rtse-pa, 171.
74 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 394; (‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 347.
75 Erberto F.Lo Bue, ‘The Role of Newar Scholars in transmitting the Indian Buddhist heritage to Tibet (c.750–c.1200)’ in *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde,* ed. Samten Karmay and Phillipe Sagant (Nanterre: Société d’ethnologie, 1997), 642.
76 Lo Bue, 636.
77 Ibid., 639–40.
78 Derge, text 1580.
79 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 390; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 344.
80 Ibid., (Roerich), 386; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 341.
81 Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge, 196–202.
82 Derge Canon, texts 1265, 1485, 1550, 1555.
83 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 396; (’Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 348.
84 Ibid., texts 1551–4, 1556.
85 Ibid., text 1556.

86 Ibid., texts 1551, 1553.
87 Ibid., text 1552.
88 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 67b; (Oxford), 52b; (Stockholm), n.a.
89 Ibid., (Newark), 68a–69a; (Oxford), 52b–53a; (Stockholm), n.a.
90 Ibid., (Newark), 69a; (Oxford), 53b; (Stockholm), n.a.
91 Ibid., (Newark), 69a–69b; (Oxford), 53b–54a; (Stockholm), n.a.
92 Ibid., (Newark), 69b; (Oxford), 54a; (Stockholm), n.a.
93 Ibid., (Newark), 69b; (Oxford), 54a; (Stockholm), n.a.
94 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 439–40; ('Gos Lotsāba), 384.
95 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 70a–70b; (Oxford), 54b; (Stockholm), n.a.
96 Ibid., (Newark), 70b; (Oxford), 54b; (Stockholm), n.a.
97 Ibid., (Newark), 70b; (Oxford), 54b; (Stockholm), n.a.
98 Ibid., (Newark), 70b–71a; (Oxford) 54b; (Stockholm), n.a.
99 Ibid., (Newark), 71a–2a; (Oxford), 55b; (Stockholm), n.a.
100 Ibid., (Newark), 72a–72b; (Oxford), 56a; (Stockholm), n.a.
101 Ibid., (Newark), 72b–73a; (Oxford), 56a; (Stockholm), n.a.
102 *rGya-bod yig-tshang chen-mo,* 526–7.
103 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 109–10.
104 Mon-rtse-pa, 1698.
105 Ibid., 169. rGyal po na re sngar mi 'ong pa da yi ger bris la skur gyis zer nas yi ge la mi bcu dgu thon/tshur la bcu gsum 'ongs/
106 Ibid., 169, *sgres* for *bgras.*
107 Ibid., 169.
108 Ibid., 170, *bsgres.*
109 Ibid., 171.
110 *Byin-rlabs gyi Chu-rgyun,* 337–54.
111 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 382. bal por ras chung pa dang kyi ston la phrin las kyang cung zad byung bas/ti pu pa'i slob ma bha-ri-ma dang mjal/kho khom rgyal po la lo rgyus byas lam yig zhus pas/sngar spyan ma 'drongs pa'i grub thob de'i thugs sras yin par 'dug zer 'dod pa bzhin gyi 'ga' 'dra rang chas byung ste/rgya gar du phebs nas ti pu pa dang mjal nas chos kyang 'dod pa bzhin thob pa dang/ti pu pa yang rje btsun la dad nas skyes su a ka ru'i phyag 'khar zhig bskur ba dang/gzhan yang ras chung pas ma gcig grub pa'i rgyal mo dang mjal te tshe dpag med kyi gdams ngag thob pa.
112 lHa-btsun, 501.
113 Ibid., 502.
114 Ibid., 502–6.
115 Ibid., 507.
116 Ibid., 507–8.
117 Ibid., 508.
118 Ibid., 508–10.
119 Ibid., 510–11.
120 Gyurme Dorje, 63.
121 Gyurme Dorje, 260–4.
122 Ibid., 264, Dorje incorrectly states that it was Rechungpa's birthplace.
123 lHa-btsun, 512.
124 Ibid., 512–13.
125 Mon-rtse-pa, 168.
126 lHa-btsun, 512–15.
127 Ibid., 515.
128 Ibid., 515–17.
129 Ibid., 518–20.
130 Ibid., 520–1.

131 Ibid., 521–2.
132 Ibid., 522.
133 Mon-rtse-pa, 35.
134 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 63: *khyi ston bzi nas rje btsun gyi brang la so btab nas/*
135 Ibid., 66.
136 Ibid., 268.
137 Lo Bue, 652.
138 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 227; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 203.
139 Ibid., (Roerich), 375.
140 Ibid., (Roerich), 378.
141 Ibid., (Roerich), 360.
142 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 382.
143 RGod-tshang Ras-pa, 108–9.
144 Ibid., 68.
145 Ibid., 72.
146 Charles Ramble, Pers. comm., 2 March 2001.
147 Hubert Decleer, Pers. comm., 10 February 2004
148 lHa-btsun, 507: *Nga'i phas nā ro mei tri gnyis ka'i slob ma/gha ya dha ra la zhus.*
149 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 74: *Nga' 'i pha nāro me tri gnyis ka'i slob ma yin/ paṇḍita gha ya dha ra bya ba yin/*
150 Mon-rtse-pa, 170.
151 gTsang-smyon Heruka, *sGra-bsgyur Mar-pa Lotsāba'i rNam-thar m Thong-ba Don-ldan* (Kulu Manali: A-pho Rin-po-che'i dgon-pa), 89b-99b.
152 rGod-tshang Ras-pa., 36–7.
153 Ibid., 75. Tsaṇḍika la dngos grub sku/'dod 'jo'i ba mo sku'i rten/bha ga la'i phag mo rnyed/spyan drangs me tog char rgyun phab/zla mgon mi snang dngos grub thob/ gha ya dha ra nyi zer rgyu/grub pa'i rgyal mo tshe la dbang/ti phu dur khrod chas kyis brgyan/
154 Roerich, 72.
155 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 75–7.
156 Ibid., 77–8.
157 Ibid., 80. Bu pha'i tshe dang mnyam pa zhig byed dgos.
158 Abhayadatta, *Grub-thob brGyad-bcu-rtsa-bzhi'i Chos-skor (Caturaśīti-siddha-pravṛtti), trans. sMon-'grub Shes-rab* (New Delhi: Chophel Legdan, 1973), 276–83.
159 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 84–90.
160 Ibid., 90–2.
161 Ibid., 92–3.
162 Ibid., 94–8.
163 Ibid., 100.
164 Ibid., 105–8.
165 Ibid., 108.
166 Ibid., 108–9.
167 Ibid., 111–12.
168 Ibid., 112.
169 Jams-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 10.
170 Ibid., 11.
171 Sangs-rgyas Dar-po, 75a.
172 Byang-chub bZang-po, 128–32.
173 Ibid., 129.
174 Ibid., 129–31.
175 Ibid., 131.
176 Ibid., 131–2.

177 Ibid., 132.
178 *bKa'-brgyud mGur-mtsho,* 100a6–101a3; *The Rain of Wisdom,* 215–17.
179 gTsug-lag Phreng-ba, 378.
180 Pad-ma dKar-po, 502.
181 Ibid., 503.
182 Zhwa-dmar Chos-kyi Don-grub, *Tshe-dpag-med dBang-dpe* (title page n.a.), 15b.
183 Śākya Rin-chen, 179–88.
184 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 797–802; ('Gos Lotsāba), 701–5.
185 Ibid., (Roerich), 325; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 288.
186 Derge, texts 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 3795, 3968, 4544.
187 Ibid., texts 1271, 1434, 1435, 1437, 1441, 1443, 1444, 1448, 1541, 1568–72, 1887, 1925, 3663, 4592.
188 Derge Canon, 2710.
189 Hubert Decleer, Pers. comm., 10 Febraury 2004.
190 lHa-btsun, *Grub-thob gTsang-pa sMyon-pa'i rNam-thar,* 114.
191 Situ Padma Nyin-byed dBang-po, *'Phags pa mchog spyan ras gzigs rgyal ba rgya mtsho'i dbang bskur ye shes myur 'bebs,* 11b–12a.
192 Guru bKra-shis, 601.

8
THE YAK HORN AND BURNING TEXTS

1 *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo,* 1841.
2 An example is Mi-pham 'Jam-dbyangs rGya-mtsho, *Las Sna-tshogs kyi Be'u-bum* (China: Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1999).
3 rGya-ldang-pa, 356–7.
4 Ibid., 357.
5 Ibid., 357.
6 Ibid., 357. The song is called *'Dur-dbyangs.* Although *'Dur* can have a variety of meanings, here it appears to have the simplest of these meanings, an equivalent of gro, ('to go'), thus signifying a song sung while walking or running.
7 Ibid., 358. zhe sdang ma byed bdag rgyud bsreg/sdug bsngal ma byed rang sems rlag/ khyod sgrub na gdams ngag bya bzhin du/'phur te brag gi gseb tu thal/gsol ba btab na byon te mchi/
8 Ibid., 359. Ras chung pa'i bsam pa la/'o na de rnams kyis/ngal la gnod pa'am mi phan pa'i rtags yin snyam nas blo zhi lhan song ngo//
9 Mon-rtse-pa, 171: Ras chung pa legs se can du spe *[sic]* cha mang du bzhag; rGyaldang-pa, 357: yon bdag mo cig la dpe cha be [alternative spelling for *be'u]* bum che shos cig yod pa.
10 Mon-rtse-pa., 172.
11 Byang-chub bZang-po, 132.
12 Ibid., 132.
13 Ibid., 132.
14 Byang-chub bZang-po, 133: gdams ngag mang na bdud du 'gro.
15 NGMPP *rNam-thar,* 27a–27b, 'di gcig shes kun la mkhas pa cig 'ong mno' *[sic:* mno] tsa na/kun shes gcig la gdugs pa cig 'ong bar 'dug; *Rwa-lung,* 213: rje btsun gyi gsung nas 'di gcig shes kun grol zhig yong ngam smyam tsa na/kun shes gcig la rdugs pa zhig yong bar 'dug.
16 *Deb-ther dMar-po,* 80; *rGya-bod Tshang-yig,* 526–7.

17 NGMPP *rNam-thar,* 28a: The text also adds at this point that Rechungpa's stay at the hermitage of Chungpo Chokar *(bCung-pa mChog-dkar)* both in earlier and later years added up to a total of thirteen. However, the identity of this hermitage is obscure. Perhaps the name is an alternative for Drakar Taso *(Brag-dkar rTa-so).*
18 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 73a; (Oxford), 56a–b; (Stockholm), n.a.
19 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* 73a, has mChong-gling in error.
20 rGya-ldang-pa, 357.
21 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 73b–74a; (Oxford), 56b–57a; (Stockholm), n.a.
22 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74b–75a; (Oxford), 57b; (Stockholm), 71a.
23 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74a; (Oxford), 57a; (Stockholm), n.a.
24 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74a; (Oxford), 57a; (Stockholm), n.a.
25 rGya-ldang-pa, 357.
26 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74a–b; (Oxford), 57a–b; (Stockholm), concludes on 71b.
27 Byang-chub bZang-po, 132.
28 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74b; (Oxford) 57b; (Stockholm) n.a.
29 Ibid., (Newark), 74b–75a; (Oxford) 57b; (Stockholm) 71b.
30 rGya-ldang-pa, 357.
31 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 75a–b; (Oxford), 57b–58a; (Stockholm), 71b–72a.
32 Ibid., (Newark), 75b–76a; (Oxford), 58a–58b; (Stockholm), 72a–b.
33 Ibid., (Newark), 76b; (Oxford), 58b–59a; (Stockholm), 72b–73a.
34 Ibid., (Newark), 76b; (Oxford), 58b–59a; (Stockholm), 73a.
35 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 193.
36 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 77b–78a; (Oxford), 59b; (Stockholm), 73b–74a.
37 Ibid., (Newark), brtsan.
38 Ibid., (Stockholm), phugs.
39 Ibid., (Newark), pa; (Stockholm), n.a.
40 Ibid., (Newark), 77b–78a; (Oxford), 59b; (Stockholm), 74a.
41 Ibid., (Newark), 78a; (Oxford), 60a; (Stockholm), 74a–b.
42 Ibid., (Newark), 79b–80a; (Oxford), 61a-b; (Stockholm), 75b–76a.
43 Ibid., (Newark), 80a–1a; (Oxford), 61b–62a; (Stockholm), n.a.
44 Ibid., (Newark), 81a; (Oxford), 62a; (Stockholm), n.a.
45 Ibid., (Newark), 81b; (Oxford), 62a–b; (Stockholm), n.a.
46 Ibid., (Newark), 81b–3b; (Oxford), 62b–64a; (Stockholm), n.a.
47 Ibid., (Newark), 82a; (Oxford), 63b; (Stockholm), 78a.
48 Ibid., (Stockholm), ri yi.
49 Ibid., (Stockholm), khu.
50 Ibid., (Newark), 83b; (Oxford), 64a; (Stockholm), 79a.
51 Ibid., (Newark and Stockholm), *ma* not present.
52 Ibid., (Newark and Stockholm), *ma* not present.
53 Ibid., (Stockholm), sdigs.
54 Ibid., (Stockholm), ba.
55 Ibid., (Newark), 83a; (Oxford), 63b; (Stockholm), 78b.
56 Ibid., (Newark), 83b–4b; (Oxford), 64a–b; (Stockholm), 79a–b.
57 Ibid., (Newark), *seb na* not present.
58 Ibid., (Oxford), ba.
59 Ibid., (Newark), thon.
60 Ibid., (Newark), *nas* not present.
61 Ibid., (Newark), par.
62 Ibid., (Newark), 84b; (Oxford), 64b; (Stockholm), n.a.
63 Ibid., (Newark), 84b–85a; (Oxford), 65a; (Stockholm), 79b–80a.

64 Ibid., (Newark), 85a–b; (Oxford), 65a-b; (Stockholm), 80a–b.
65 rGya-ldang-pa, 358.
66 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 85b; (Oxford), 65b; (Stockholm), 80b.
67 Ibid., (Newark), 86a; (Oxford), 66a; (Stockholm), 81a–b.
68 Zhwa-dmar-pa, 285–8.
69 Ibid., 286.
70 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 77b; (Oxford) 59b; (Stockholm) 74a.
71 Zhwa-dmar-pa, 287. Bu chung nas skyangs pa'i ras chung pa/sgom chen stan rdol cig re ba la/dpe cha 'di yi mang lugs kyis/ston chen lham rdol cig 'ong nyen gda'/
72 *Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* 365–70.
73 Ibid., 371. Sems shong na lus shong bas rang re pha spad me tog gi gdugs 'di yis *[sic]* zhabs na dbyang cig thon dgos.
74 Ibid., 371–2.
75 Ibid., 373.
76 Ibid., 374–5.
77 Ibid., 375.
78 Ibid., 376–9; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 79b–80a; (Oxford), 61a–b; (Stockholm), 75b–76a.
79 Ibid., 379–82.
80 Ibid., 382. kha ba sa skya cig bab pas.
81 Ibid., 383. A pha nga yis (sic) bu ras chung pa 'di la bsgom *[sic]* chen stan rdol cig re ba la gshan pa lags *[sic]* dmar cig 'ong bar snang/ngan sngags 'di kun bod du phel na mi mang po phung bar snang/
82 Ibid., 382–6.
83 Ibid., 386–7.
84 Ibid., 387–8.
85 Ibid., 388–9.
86 Ibid., 389–90.
87 These sacred sites are listed in both the Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara Tantras, but in neither do we find thirty-eight *kṣetra*. See David L.Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism (London: Serindia Publications, 1987) 167–70.
88 *Byin-brlabs kyi Chu-rgyun,* 390–1.
89 Ibid., 391–2.
90 Ibid., 392–5.
91 Ibid., 395–7.
92 Ibid., 398–401.
93 Ibid., 404.
94 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 386–400.
95 Ibid., 400: sras rnams gyi sring bzhi'i ya bar gyur ba'i lo rgyus ngan rdzong ston pa byang chub rgyal pos.
96 Ibid., 396.
97 Ibid., 396. Chang, 416 mistranslates the cave as being half-way between Brag-dmar and La-phyi.
98 Ibid., 407; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 77a; (Oxford), 59a; (Stockholm), 73a.
99 Ibid., 408. Ras 'ga' ni khyi rgas kyin zhe sdang che/mi rgas kyin 'dod pa che/
100 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 411; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 78a; (Oxford), 60a; (Stockholm), 74a.
101 Ibid., 411–19; *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 78b–81a; (Oxford), 60a-62b; (Stockholm), 74b–n.a.
102 Ibid., 422–3.
103 Ibid., 424–5.

104 Ibid., 425–6.
105 Ibid., 426–7.
106 Ibid., 427. rGod ltar lding zhing khra ltar bzhud pa dang/glog ltar ‘khyug pa la sogs.
107 Ibid., 427–9.
108 Ibid., 430: *zhe thag pa na brag g.yang la mchongs pas lus yang phyod pa dang bcas brag logs su lus.* This was translated by Chang (451) as ‘he crashed on a great rock’.
109 Ibid., 429–33.
110 ‘Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi Grags-pa, 11.
111 lHa-btsun, 522.
112 lHa-btsun, 523; *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 73b–74a; (Oxford), 56b; (Stockholm), n.a.: rje gangs dkar ‘grims [Oxford: ‘grim] pa’i rnal-'byor pa [Newark: *la* an interlinear addition or emendation *of pa]; Mi-la’i mGur- ‘bum,* 401–2: da gangsstongs ‘grims pa’i rnal ‘byor pa.
113 lHa-btsun, 523–4; *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74a; (Oxford), 57a; *Mi-la’i mGur- ‘bum,* 402–3.
114 lHa-btsun, 524. *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74a–b; (Oxford), 57a–b; (Stockholm), n.a.
115 lHa-btsun, 524–5, *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 74b–75a; (Oxford), 57b; (Stockholm), n.a.; *Mila’i mGur-‘bum,* 402–3.
116 lHa-btsun, 525; *Bu-chen* (Newark), 75a–b; (Oxford), 57b–58a; (Stockholm), 71b–72a; *Mila’i mGur-‘bum,* 403–5.
117 *mDur* is an alternative spelling of *‘dur.*
118 ‘Ha-btsun, 526–7; *Bu-chen* (Newark), 75b–76a; (Oxford), 58a–58b; (Stockholm), 72a–b; *mGur-‘bum,* 405–6.
119 lHa-btsun, 528; *Bu-chen* (Newark), 76b; (Oxford), 58b–59a; (Stockholm), 72b–73a; *mGur-‘bum,* 406–7.
120 *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 77b–78a; (Oxford), 59b; *mGur-‘bum,* 409–10.
121 lHa-btsun, 528.
122 lHa-btsun, 528–9; *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 78a; (Oxford), 60a; *Mila’i mGu- ‘bum,* 410–11.
123 lHa-btsun, 529–31; *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 80b–81a; (Oxford), 61b–62a; (Stockholm), n.a.; *Mila’i mGur-‘bum,* 418–19.
124 lHa-btsun, 531–2: dad pa gting nas log yod pa la/rje btsun gyi rdzu ‘phrul ci bstan rung yid ma ches par/nam mkha’i mthongs la ‘phur nas mtho ru btang/gsung lhang ba ma gtogs sku mi mthong bar song ba dang/
125 Ibid., 532: gcong g.yang sa la ‘phyongs/brgyal ba sangs pa dang/dpon slob gnyis shog bu bsregs sa na sleb ‘dug pas/bla ma la mi phyed pa’i dad pa skyes nas/lo bcu gnyis ‘bral med du zhabs tog byed pa’i dam bca’ phul lo/
126 Ibid., 532–4.
127 Ibid., 549–57.
128 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 113; *mGur-‘bum,* 400.
129 Ibid., 127; *mGur-‘bum,* 419.
130 Ibid., 127; *bZhad-pa’i rDo-rje’i rNam-thar* (Newark), 81a; (Oxford), 62a; (Stockholm), n.a.
131 Ibid., 128–9.
132 Ibid., 167.
133 dPa’-bo gTsug-lag, 378.
134 Pad-ma dKar-po, 503.
135 Ibid., 497.
136 Ibid., 498.
137 Śākya Rin-chen, 209–17.
138 Ibid., 211. nga’i bla ma ‘di mi rnams kyang smyon pa yin zer/ ‘dra yang smyon pa cig rang ‘dra ‘dug/las ma nus pa zhig la ming grub thob tu btags pa ni min las che ang snyam.

139 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 75b; (Oxford), 58a; (Stockholm), 72a.
140 Ibid., 211.
141 Ibid., 216.
142 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 430; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 140.
143 *History of Drakar Taso,* 20a.

9
MARRIAGE, PUPILS AND THE END OF LIFE

1 *Mi-la'i mGur-bum,* 87, 440–1.
2 bSod-nams lHun-grub, *mNyam-med sGam-po-ba'i rNam-thar* (Zi-ling, China: mTsho-sngon Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1993), 65. Ras chung pa 'di kho rang gi 'bras bu phyin ci ma log pa thob kyang/ 'gro ba la phan chen po mi thogs/da sdod dbus pa ston pa zhig gis 'gro ba mang po la phan thogs pa 'ong ba yin.
3 rGya-ldang-pa, 360.
4 Ibid., 364.
5 Ibid., 365–6.
6 Ibid., 366.
7 rDo-rje mDzes-'od, 141.
8 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 243b; (Oxford), 192b; (Stockholm), 274b-275a.
9 *Deb-ther dMar-po,* 80.
10 Pal-'byor bZang-po, 526.
11 sTag-lung-pa, 218.
12 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 106–7.
13 '*khrungs* (born) is probably an error in transcribing *byung* (appeared/arose) from the *dbu-med* script.
14 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 168.
15 NGMPP *bKa'-brgyud rNam-thar,* 24b–25a.
16 Zhwa-dmar-pa, 316.
17 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar: Ras chung Ü bzhud,* (Newark), 195a–200a; (Oxford), 150b–155a; (Stockholm), 197b–202a.
18 Ibid., (Newark), 200a–201b; (Oxford), 155a–156b; (Stockholm), 202a–203b.
19 Ibid., (Newark), 201b–204a; (Oxford), 156b–8b; (Stockholm), 203b–207a.
20 Ibid., (Newark), 204b–210a; (Oxford), 158b–62b; (Stockholm), 207a–212b.
21 Ibid., (Newark), 210a–12a; (Oxford), 162b–164a; (Stockholm), 212b–14b.
22 Ibid., (Newark), 212a–21a; (Oxford), 164a–176b; (Stockholm), 214b–233a.
23 Ibid., (Newark), 223b–6b; (Oxford), 178a–179b; (Stockholm), n.a.
24 Ibid., (Newark), *yi* omitted.
25 Ibid., (Newark), 226a; (Oxford), 179b; (Stockholm), n.a.
26 Ibid., (Oxford) *bas.*
27 Ibid., (Newark), 226b; (Oxford), 179b; (Stockholm), n.a.
28 Ibid., (Newark), 212a (Oxford), 164a; (Stockholm), 214b.
29 Ibid., (Newark) 219a–b; (Oxford), 173b; (Stockholm), absent.
30 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 221a.
31 Ibid., (Oxford), 175a–b.
32 Ibid., (Stockholm), 230a.
33 Zhwa-dmar-pa, 309–16.
34 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 483.

35 lHa-btsun, *Grub-thob gTsang-pa sMyon-pa'i rNam-thar,* 125; ngas *(sic;* [nga'i]) rgyud *(sic;* [brgyud]) pa dags *(sic;* [dwags]) po bka' rgyud *(sic;* [brgyud]) du grags pa de yin.
36 Sangs-rgyas Dar-po, 50b.
37 Ibid., 74b.
38 Ibid., 75a.
39 *Mi-la'i mGur-'bum,* 560.
40 Ibid., 567.
41 Ibid., 567.
42 *Mi-la'i rnam-thar,* 267–8.
43 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 603.
44 rGya-ldang-pa, 371.
45 Ibid., 376–7.
46 Ibid., 379.
47 Ibid., 379.
48 Ibid., 378–80.
49 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 439; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 383, de nas yar klungs su bzhugs pa la phyag rgya mo lha gcig yod pa/des skyes pa gzhan dang lhan cig nyal bas thugs skyo ste bros nas.
50 Ibid., (Oxford), lcam.
51 Ibid., (Oxford), bu.
52 Ibid., (Oxford), omitted.
53 *bZhad-pa'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar* (Newark), 204b–210a; (Oxford), 158b–62b; (Stockholm), 207a–212b.
54 Ibid., (Newark), 205b; (Oxford), 159a; (Stockholm), 208a *brjed pa ngas ma tshor/*
55 Ibid., (Newark), 210a–12a; (Oxford), 162b–164a; (Stockholm), 212b–14b.
56 Ibid., (Newark), 208b; (Oxford), 161b: *mo g.yu la dga' ba cig yod;* (Stockholm), 211a: *mo g.yu la dad che ba zhig yod.*
57 lHa-btsun, 636–7.
58 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 264–329, 499–519.
59 Ibid., 319–27.
60 Ibid., 507–8.
61 *bZhad-pa 'i rDo-rje'i rNam-thar,* (Newark), 208b; (Oxford), 161b; (Stockholm), 21 la.
62 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 328.
63 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 309–10.
64 Ibid., 265–74.
65 Ibid., 294.
66 Ibid., 654.
67 Ibid., 516–17.
68 Rwa Ye-shes Seng-ge, *mThu-stobs dBang-phyug rJe-btsun Rwa Lo-tsā-ba'i rNam-par-thar-pa Kun-khyab sNyan-pa'i rNga-sgra* (Zi-ling, China: mTsho-sngon Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang, 1989), 272.
69 Ibid., 275.
70 Ibid., 274–5.
71 Ibid., 241–6.
72 Ibid., 246–7.
73 Ibid., 210–13.
74 Ibid., 240–1.
75 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 286–91; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 255–60.
76 Ibid., (Roerich), 438; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 383.
77 Ibid., (Roerich), 292; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba) 260–4; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 386–96.
78 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 522–4.
79 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 311–14; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 276–9; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 379–83.

80 Ibid., (Roerich), 285; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 254; rje btsun mid la dang rdzu 'phrul su che zer ba byung.
81 Ibid., (Roerich), 284–5; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 254–5; rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 383–6.
82 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 641.
83 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 273–6; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 244–7.
84 Ibid., (Roerich), 273; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 244; sku na gzhon pa nas lo ro ras chung pa'i slob ma yin pa.
85 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich), 660; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 577. *rGod tshang ras pa ras chung pa dngos dang mjal ba'i gsung mang po gnang ba la cung zad the tshoms skyes.*
86 Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998), 117–25.
87 Ibid., 69.
88 An example of a Tibetan custom of legally killing one's wife is given by Indra Majupuria, *Tibetan Women* (M.Devi, 1990), 118; quoted in Ruth Campbell, *Traveller in Space* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), 29.
89 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 520–1.
90 *The Blue Annals* (Roerich) 660–1; ('Gos Lo-tsā-ba), 577.
91 *lHo-rong Chos-'byung,* 630–1.
92 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 647.
93 Lha-bstun, 828–9.
94 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 527–8.
95 Lha-btsun, 829–30.
96 gZan-dkar Rin-po-che, Pers. comm., London, 1984.
97 Bla-ma Thub-bstan rNam-rgyal, Pers. comm., Birmingham, 1985.
98 See Orgyan Tobgyal, *The Life and Teaching of Chokgyur Lingpa,* trans. Tulku Jigmey and Erik Pema Kunsang (Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1988), 47.
99 Paṇ-chen 'Os-sprul, Pers. comm., County Cavan, Ireland, 1989.
100 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, *rJe-btsun ras-pa chen-po la brten-pa'i rnal-'byor gyi zin-bris ye-shes gsal-byed* (publisher unknown), 13 a.
101 Yongs-dge Mi-'gyur rDo-rje, *rJe Karma Pakshi zhal-gzigs-ma'i las-byang,* 4b
102 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 576.
103 Ibid., 203.
104 Yongs-dge Mi-'gyur rDo-rje, 6a.
105 Ibid., 7b.
106 mKha'-khyab rDo-rje, *rJe Karma Pakshi zhal-gzigs kyi gsol-'debs,* la.
107 Pers. comm., Yong-ge Mingyur Rinpoche, San Francisco, April 2005.
108 rGod-tshang Ras-pa, 662. Thog med dus nas mngon par sangs rgyas kyang/Thugs rje'i phrin las srid mthar mdzad pa yis/
109 Ibid., 644–5.

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INDEX

Deities

Institutions

Lineages

Miscellaneous

Persons

Appearance in texts

Places

Practices

Texts